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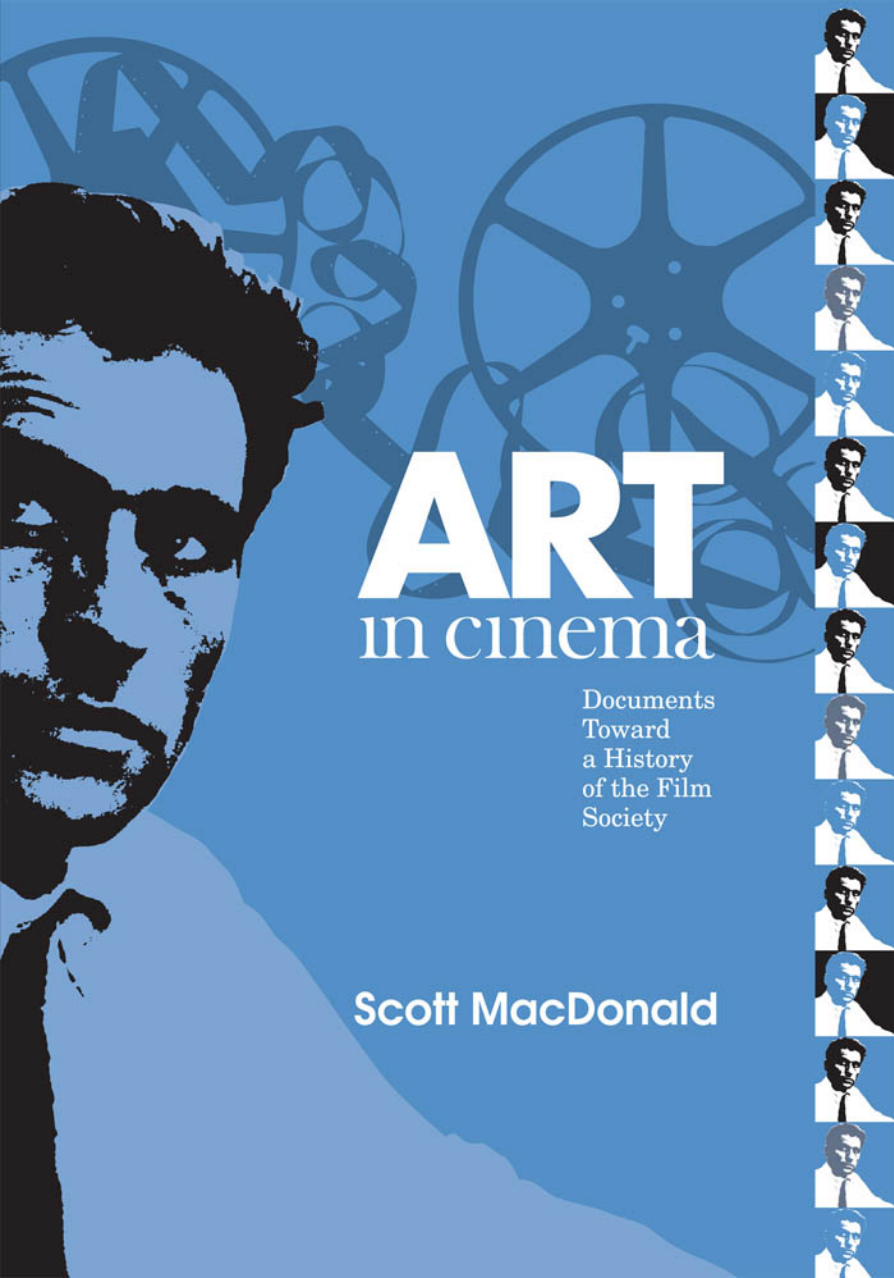
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in cinema
Documents
Toward
a History
of the Film
Society
Scott MacDonald

Art in Cinema

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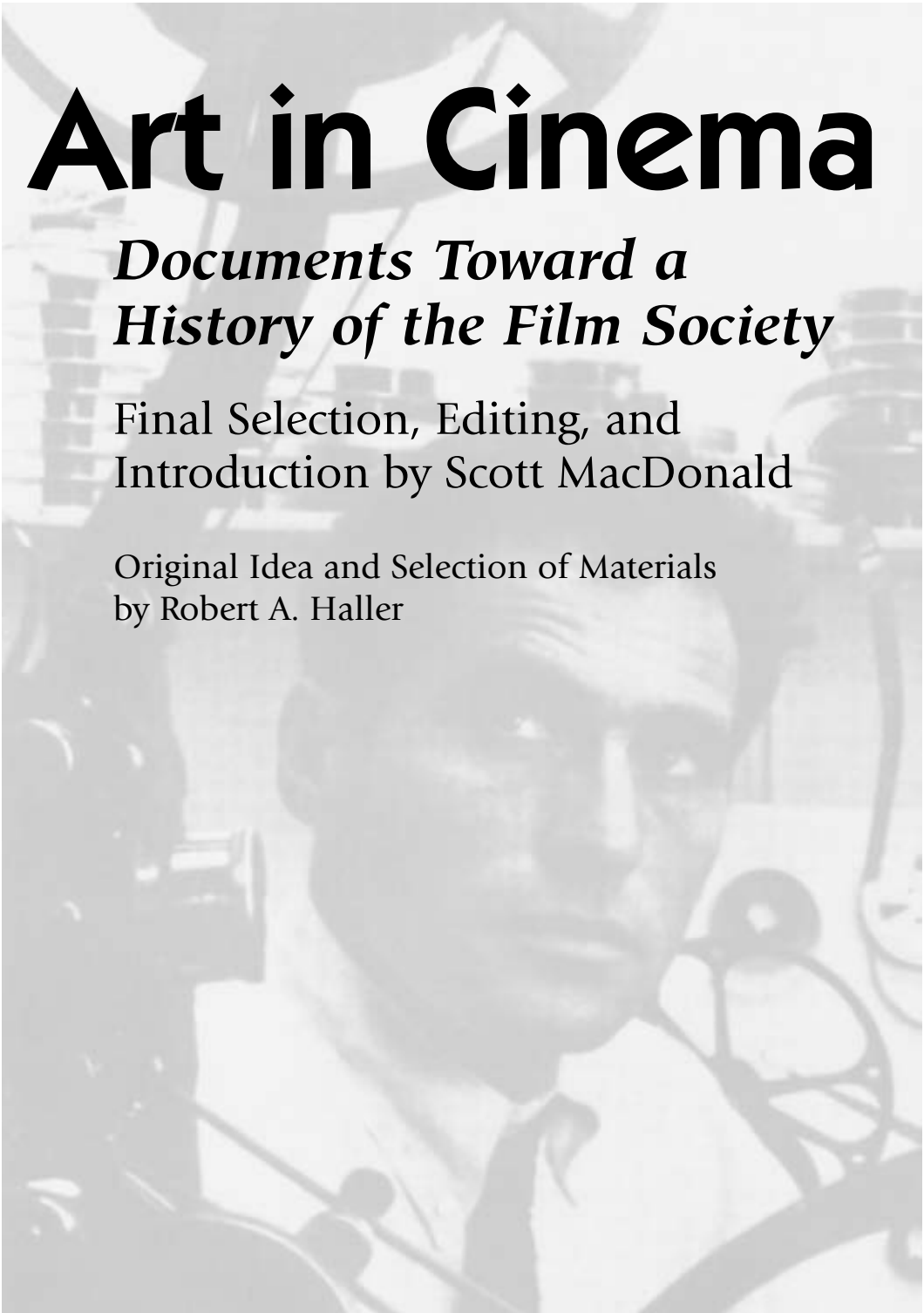

Art in Cinema

Documents Toward a History of the Film Society

Final Selection, Editing, and Introduction by Scott MacDonald

Original Idea and Selection of Materials by Robert A. Haller

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Introduction

Background

Over the past half-century, no American city has been more consistently identified with alternative cinema than San Francisco and environs. There are a variety of reasons for the Bay Area's preeminence in the independent media scene. Obviously, a good many filmmakers (and more recently videomakers) have made the Bay Area their home for extended periods: Sidney Peterson, James Broughton, Jordan Belson, Harry Smith, Bruce Conner, Bruce Baillie, Chick Strand, Robert Nelson, Gunvor Nelson, Nathaniel Dorsky, Stephen Beck, George Kuchar, Mike Kuchar, Ernie Gehr, Warren Sonbert, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Craig Baldwin, Marlon Riggs, Cauleen Smith, and Greta Snider, to name just a few. But what has lured so many makers to the Bay Area and has kept them there is the region's tradition of institutional support for alternative media-making. The San Francisco Art Institute (formerly known as the California School of Fine Arts), Canyon Cinema, the Pacific Film Archive, the Center for Experiments in Television, the San Francisco Cinematheque, and other institutions have maintained a vital independent film/video culture in the region during the past generation. But before any of these organizations began to make major contributions to independent media, the Art in Cinema film series, founded by Frank Stauffacher and Richard Foster in 1946 and run by Stauffacher with the help of friends and family through 1954, had demonstrated not only that there *was* an alternative film history and an audience for it, but that the Bay Area could be one of its nodal points.

Under the auspices of the San Francisco Museum of Art, Art in Cinema presented its first public series in the fall of 1946 (ten events), and continued the following spring with a second series (five events). From 1946 until Stauffacher's death in 1955, Art in Cinema presented film series more or less regularly: fall 1947 (five events); fall 1948 (five events); fall 1949 (four events); spring 1950 (four events); spring 1951 (five events); fall 1952 (four events); fall 1953 (five events); spring 1954 (seven events); fall 1954 (six events)—sometimes supplementing these series with special programs: for example, two presentations of "Contemporary Experimental Films of Importance" in spring 1949; Anais Nin's presentation of husband Ian Hugo's *Ai-Ye* in 1950; and Roger Manvell's illustrated lecture on British cinema in May 1952. Beginning in 1947, a second, related series, also, so far as I know, programmed by Stauffacher (or at least based on Stauffacher's programming), was presented at the University of California in Berkeley; the Berkeley programs were similar but not identical to those presented in San Francisco.

For a museum to present sixty-odd film events over a period of nine years doesn't sound all that elaborate to modern viewers (currently the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley offers nearly this many events on each bi-monthly calendar). But the presentations of Art in Cinema had an impact well beyond anything suggested by the number of events offered to the public. This impact was simultaneously an accident of history and the result of a remarkable commitment on the part of Stauffacher, with timely support from the Museum of Art. Like others interested in expanded opportunities for seeing the broadest range of cinema during the postwar years, Stauffacher discovered that, for whatever reasons, some audiences, especially in urban areas, were ready for alternatives.

Of course, even the most successful ventures into independent exhibition could hardly compare with the popular success of Hollywood movies at commercial movie houses. But in our era, when an audience of one hundred for an experimental film seems a success, Stauffacher's ability to attract five hundred to his San Francisco screenings on a regular basis, and more than that in Berkeley, seems remarkable (as does Amos Vogel's even greater success in attracting thousands of

members to the presentations of New York's Cinema 16 Film Society, which from the outset counted on Stauffacher for advice and support).

While Stauffacher's initiative resulted in something new for the Bay Area, it was hardly without precedents, especially in Europe. Indeed, the intermingling of Europeans and Americans during and after the two world wars probably helped some Americans become aware of the cine-club movement that had spread across Europe and the United Kingdom in the 1920s and 1930s.[1] In the case of Art in Cinema, this European influence seems apparent in Stauffacher's tendency, during most of the years he programmed the series, to combine a feature-length narrative film (usually either an American or European classic) with several short avant-garde films, and/or animations, and/or documentaries. This programming model was common to earlier, European film societies. The London Film Society programs, for example, reveal a similar programming strategy, using some of the particular films Stauffacher presented at Art in Cinema.[2]

There were American precedents as well, including Symon Gould's New York City Film Guild, which was successful enough in offering alternatives to Hollywood that it could support the design (by Frederick Kiesler) and construction of its own theater, which in later years became known as the Waverly).[3] Also by the mid-1930s, the Museum of Modern Art in New York—as a result of efforts of the museum's first director, Alfred H. Barr—was creating a film library with a mandate to preserve and exhibit (and subsequently distribute) a broader range of films than was commercially viable in the United States. In fact, the museum was a crucial early resource for Stauffacher and Foster, both for the films they wanted to present and for information about these films. Art in Cinema's earliest program notes quote Iris Barry, one of the major figures in the London Film Society, who became the MoMA Film Library's first film curator.[4]

But if a new interest in alternative forms of cinema was in the air, in San Francisco, New York, and elsewhere during the years following World War II, the particular impact of Art in Cinema was a function of Stauffacher's ongoing commitment as an artist-exhibitor, and the supportive contributions of those who, at various moments during Art in Cinema's nine-year run, collaborated with him: Richard Foster during the first year; Harry Smith later on; and during the final years, Barbara Stauffacher (now Barbara Stauffacher Solomon), Stauffacher's wife from 1948. All three assisted Stauffacher in making contact with filmmakers, and in other ways as well. Both Jack Stauffacher, Frank's younger brother, and Barbara Stauffacher remember that Richard Foster's ability with public relations was crucial for Art in Cinema, especially right at the beginning. Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley, director of the San Francisco Museum of Art, was also supportive throughout the Art in Cinema years.

From the earliest planning stages, it was obvious that Stauffacher was committed not only to a thoroughly professional presentation of events to an audience with a serious interest in the arts, but to the ongoing education of this audience and to the development of the potential of what he tended to call "experimental" film. That Stauffacher assumed a serious audience is obvious, not simply from his frequent choice of challenging films, but from the length of his programs, which, after the first year, regularly included a feature narrative plus several shorter films, some of which would be likely to test the patience of at least some viewers.

Stauffacher and Foster suggested crucial dimensions of their programming philosophy in their first series announcement:

> We hope that this series will accomplish several purposes: that it will show the relation between the film and the other art media—sculpture, painting, poetry; that it will stimulate interest in the film as a creative art medium in itself, requiring more of an effort of participation on the part of the audience than the Hollywood fantasies, before which an audience sits passively and uncreatively; and that it will give assistance to those contemporary artists who labor in obscurity in America with no distribution channels for their work.

For Stauffacher and his colleagues, the relationship between experimental film and modern art was crucial. As they made clear in their announcement for the second series, "The Avantgarde and experimental cinema embraces all attitudes of the so-called 'temper of modern art'—including such forms of expression as surrealism, abstraction, realism, symbolism, non-objective form, etc. The cinema as an art form has undergone—and is undergoing still—all of the exploratory phases that characterize the history of other modern art forms." The first two series were

programmed so as to foreground the relationship of the films shown and trends in the modern visual arts. Relationships between modern film and modern poetry were also suggested in each of the first two programs.

Of course, the fact that "experimental filmmakers" seemed to be dealing with many of the same issues as modern painters endowed the filmmakers' efforts, as well as the efforts of Stauffacher and Foster, with an aura of respect and dignity; it made the support of the San Francisco Museum of Art feasible, and it allowed them to take their labors in assembling and presenting the events seriously. Indeed, the depth of their commitment resulted in their receiving at first no remuneration for their efforts and, later on, only symbolic remuneration. Art in Cinema was a labor of love in the service of Art: specifically, Art as the focus of an engaged community committed to Modernism.

While the first series announcement claims that the ten-event program "as originally conceived has no principle of organization" and that the method of organizing the series "has been a highly personal one," it was precisely the parallels between modern art and experimental film that provided Stauffacher and Foster with both the moniker, "Art in Cinema," and the organization of their programs. The first two series were chosen so as to provide a historical review of the accomplishments of what has come to be known as the First Avant-Garde: films produced by European artists who were interested not so much in being *filmmakers*, but in using cinema as an alternative medium for artistic experiment. While several Americans were included in the first series—Mary Ellen Bute, Maya Deren, the Whitney Brothers—the majority of filmmakers included were Europeans. The second series also emphasized Europeans but included a larger percentage of Americans; by the third series, American filmmakers were in the majority.

The pedagogical dimension of Stauffacher's programming and his commitment to the idea of film as a fine art were evident in the decision to produce a catalogue to accompany the first Art in Cinema series. While the logistics of assembling the contributions of a dozen or so writers and designing the catalogue postponed the publication of the volume until after the first series was over, *Art in Cinema: A Symposium on the Avantgarde Film*, edited by Stauffacher, became the first American attempt to assess the history of alternative cinema. *Art in Cinema*—available originally in late May 1947, reprinted by Arno Press in 1968, and presented as a facsimile in this volume—includes the programs and program notes for the first season, introductions by Foster and Stauffacher, and Henry Miller; essays by Hans Richter, Elie Faure, Man Ray, Luis Buñuel, James and John Whitney, Erich Pommer, Oskar Fischinger, Maya Deren, George Leite, and Paul Velguth; as well as a bibliography and a listing of sources for the films in the program. The catalogue is illustrated with stills, filmstrips, and drawings. *Art in Cinema* cost $2.00 ($1.50 for members of Art in Cinema and the Museum of Art). One can only conjecture what the impact of *Art in Cinema* was on the Art in Cinema audience, but since Stauffacher's book was the *only* guidebook to the new field of avant-garde film, its publication must have convinced many in the audience that *these* screenings were at the forefront of developments, *were* the avant-garde.

For Stauffacher, the curatorial mission of Art in Cinema was, first, to educate his audience about the history of alternative film, and *then*, to provide a space where American film artists could present their newest contributions to the tradition of film as modern art, a space which indeed might *instigate* American contributions to this ongoing international history. That this second part of Stauffacher's mission was successful is clear in the correspondence between Stauffacher and the many filmmakers who were in touch with him during the making of their films and in James Broughton's memories of how Stauffacher's "discovery" of him and Sidney Peterson "was the spur that changed our lives" (see Broughton's "Frank Stauffacher: The Making of 'Mother's Day'" on pp. 181–183). Through Art in Cinema, Stauffacher was able to create something like a Bay Area community of independent filmmakers. On the other hand, while it is obvious in many letters (some of them reproduced on the following pages) that the opportunity offered by Art in Cinema energized the production of films, Stauffacher frequently complained about the scarcity of avant-garde films worth showing and sometimes asked the Art in Cinema audience for tips on new experimental work.

All in all, Stauffacher's efforts were successful enough to simultaneously frustrate and reward his own creative efforts. In a letter to Hans Richter, written sometime after the special presentation of two programs of films by American experimental filmmakers in the spring of 1949,

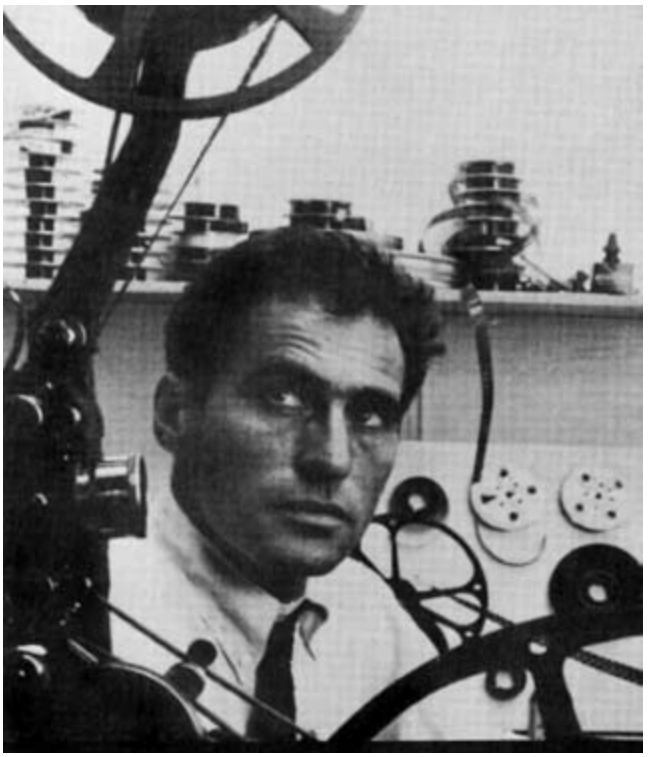

Illustration 1. Frank Stauffacher in his studio on Montgomery Street, during the editing of *Notes on the Port of St. Francis* (1952). Photographer unknown; courtesy Jack Stauffacher.

Stauffacher laments that there is no one who can take over Art in Cinema: "It is developing into a full-time job … and I want to get away from it so that I can make films myself—which was the reason I came into it at first. We wanted to establish an outlet for this type of film, and then make the films. But the job of presenting them has grown into a huge task" (see p. 191). Stauffacher had begun including films he was involved with—James Broughton's *Mother's Day* (1948), for which Stauffacher did the cinematography, and his own film *Zigzag* (1948)—in the fall 1948 series. He would continue to present his own films during the following years: *Sausalito* (1948) was shown in September 1949; *Notes on the Port of St. Francis* (1951) in November 1952; and apparently at least one rejected television commercial in May 1950 (a film called *Goethe in San Francisco* was listed in the fall 1949 program announcement, but judging from the program notes, it was not shown).

Near the end of the first Art in Cinema series, Stauffacher distributed a listing of the individual films shown, along with instructions for indicating which of the films audience members wanted to see again, which ones they did *not* want to see again, and which were "adequate." Judging from the instances of the questionnaire included in the Art in Cinema papers at Pacific Film Archive, not much useful information seems to have resulted, though Stauffacher did indicate that "The Spring showing of films will include reshowings of the works most requested …," and two films—the Whitney Brothers' *Film Exercise #1* (1944) and Alexander Alexeieff's *En Passant* (presented as part of *Chants Populaires* on October 25, 1946)—were repeated on April 18, 1947, as "Request repeats from Series One." Also, the first announcement for the Berkeley series instigated by Art in Cinema indicates that "Most of the films … were selected by the Series One audience at Art in Cinema." I am unclear as to the nature of this selection process, though the flyer indicates that an Art in Cinema Committee oversaw the University of California programs. At the beginning the committee included George Leite (who is also listed as Program Manager), Douglas MacAgy, and Grace L. McCann Morley, as well as Stauffacher and Foster (who supplied the program notes).

Stauffacher seems to have accepted that it was *his* job as curator of the series to decide what the audience might find most interesting, and having decided this, he was relentless in tracking down the newest interesting experimental work. His commitment to the filmmakers and films he showed was evident, year after year, in his continuing correspondence with them and in his informal efforts to distribute their films and to help other programmers learn about this new work. In an era before phone communication was economical, Stauffacher's ability as an affable, straightforward correspondent—an ability quite evident in the letters included in this volume—seems to have served him well.

After the fall 1946 and spring 1947 series, the Art in Cinema programs ceased to provide contextualizing titles, like "Poetry in Cinema," "The Surrealists," and "Experiments in Fantasy." Beginning with the fall 1947 series, Stauffacher apparently assumed not only that his audience would come to the films he presented as active, creative viewers, but that this audience didn't need the implied assistance of such titles. From fall 1947 until fall 1952, Stauffacher seems to have decided on programs not on the basis of definable categories, but so as to offer the audience programs of interesting films that would suggest the variety of non-Hollywood film history. Any given program might include several quite different avant-garde films, along with a classic silent feature, a foreign-language feature, and/or a documentary.

Stauffacher was dedicated to instigating a more varied, energetic, and serious independent film culture in America and in developing a sophisticated audience interested in more than conventional "passive" entertainment; however, he never seems to have seen avant-garde cinema as separate from other cinematic arenas. Implicit within the Art in Cinema programs, especially from fall 1947 though fall 1954, is a suggestion that *all* forms of "experimental cinema," made by individuals outside the industry or within the industry, are a significant part of film history, and that films are worth presenting—regardless of genre, of where they were made, of the nature of the audience they were originally made for—when they reflect their makers' inventiveness and their courage to try something new.

Like any creative programmer, Stauffacher grouped films so as to create each evening's experience: that is, he offered audiences a "meta-film" "edited" so as to create a variety of kinds of intellectual and sensual reverberation. On October 24, 1947, for example, Art in Cinema presented two animations by Oskar Fischinger (*Composition in Blue* [1931] and *Allegretto* [1936]); *Flat Hatting* (1946), a U.P.A. (United Productions of America) cartoon made to warn Navy pilots about the dangers of flying too low; *Plastics* (later known as *Transparent Plastics*, 1946), Jim Davis's first film (photographed by Charles F. Schwep); a short abstract film by Harry Smith, *No 5* (c. 1947); *Horror Dream* (1947) by Sidney Peterson and Hy Hirsh, "a choreographic interpretation of a dancer's anxiety before starting upon her theater routine" (to quote the 1963 Cinema 16 rental catalogue), with music composed by John Cage; and then, after an intermission, Edwin S. Porter's *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (1906) and Buster Keaton's *The Navigator* (1924). On the program announcement, the Smith and Peterson/Hirsh films are asterisked, indicating that they were premieres, though *Transparent Plastics* was also, according to Robert A. Haller's filmography of Davis, a premiere at Art in Cinema and was never shown publicly again.[5] The program notes for the October 24th show also indicate that both the Fischinger films and the Harry Smith were replacements for films still at the laboratory (Smith's *Absolute Films No. 2*, *No. 3*, and *No. 4* were announced in the series brochure) which would be rescheduled and presented later in the series. There was nothing unusual about this rescheduling. Even after the announcements for series were distributed, Stauffacher would continue to adjust the particular screenings on the basis of what was/wasn't available, and from time to time Stauffacher would discover a film he decided to show in place of a film already announced.

If we examine Stauffacher's program for October 24th in more detail, several implicit polemical assumptions seem evident. The show includes both classics and the newest of the new. More specifically, it includes a trick film made just as the studio system was beginning to solidify (*Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*), a feature made at a Hollywood studio, and an animation (*Flat Hatting*) by an independent animation studio that was founded by animators who had broken with Disney in the name of economic and creative freedom,[6] as well as four films by five independent makers, one of whom (Fischinger) had worked for Disney. The films were originally aimed at very different audiences: *Flat Hatting* was a U.S. Navy training film; the Keaton feature and *Dream of a Rarebit*

Fiend were made for a mass audience; the Davis, Peterson/Hirsh, and Fischinger films assume an audience interested in film as a fine art. Even this last grouping includes various expectations with regard to audience: before immigrating to the United States, for example, Fischinger was accustomed to substantial audiences for his work, and after his arrival in this country he continued to hope, to no avail, for something like a popular following. James Davis, on the other hand, assumed a far more limited audience.

And yet all these films have both general and particular elements in common: each is visually inventive, and all, in one sense or another, are externalizations of inner states: *Horror Dream* and *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* visualize dreams, or at least mental states analogous to dreams; the Fischinger, Smith, and Davis films can be read as attempts to evoke spiritual states; even *The Navigator* includes a number of dreamlike moments in a quietly surreal narrative. While the program is split between animation and live action, the live-action films either use animation (*Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*) or are related to animation (Smith's film was one of his first not to have been created one frame at a time, though Smith himself later indicated that *No. 5* was an "Homage to Oskar Fischinger"), and even *The Navigator*, along with other silent comedies, seems to have paved the way for later cartoon characters and plots.[7]

The sequencing of the October 24th program (assuming Stauffacher adhered to the order indicated in the program notes) moves viewers though a series of moods. The intermission ends the more challenging portion of the screening and delivers the audience to the pleasure and relative conventionality of the Porter and Keaton films. Of course, since these were films from the silent era, seeing them would *also* have been *un*conventional in 1947.

Overall, Stauffacher's program for October 24, 1947, makes several arguments about the nature of film history. First, like the French avant-garde filmmakers of the 1920s before him, and Tom Gunning and Bart Testa more recently, Stauffacher was implicitly arguing for the relationship between what for many viewers must have seemed like opposites: early commercial cinema and modern experimental cinema.[8] And he argues for a revision in the way audiences approach an evening at a movie theater. In the first section of the October 24th program, the audience was asked to look at a series of films made with unconventional means by filmmakers working independently. In the section of the program after the intermission, the audience was asked to re-examine the Hollywood past in light of the avant-garde films surveyed during the first half of the program, as well as through the filter of nearly two decades of sound film.

One distinctive dimension of Stauffacher's attitude toward cinema that had an important impact on his programming is evident in the program note for Davis's *Plastics*. Not only is *Plastics* a new film using unusual procedures for recording imagery, but it is described as part of a work-in-progress: "At present he [Davis] is making further cinematic experiments which, he says, 'begin where this leaves off.'" In the program notes for the third program of Art in Cinema's previous series, a similar comment is made in reference to the Whitney Brothers' *Five Film Exercises* (1943–1944): "These revolutionary film studies are the result of a film technique—still imperfect—whereby sound and image may be created simultaneously. The Whitneys do not consider these results as works of art. Thus they have called them 'exercises.'" Stauffacher certainly recognized that avant-garde filmmakers sometimes made remarkable, finished works, but he was also drawn to work that was "experimental" in the sense that it was an interim report on a cinematic investigation still underway. Indeed, for Stauffacher, the advantage of working outside the industry and its commercial pressures was the opportunity to *play* with cinema, to make films just to see what the results might look like. This attitude accounts for Stauffacher's commitment to presenting "imperfect" films, and is evident in his own filmmaking as well. Stauffacher later wrote to Amos Vogel in reference to *Sausalito*, "I feel an experimental film carried to a point of perfection can really no longer be called experimental"; "I felt it legitimate to let it [*Sausalito*] go as a truly experimental piece with the good and bad left as they were; in the nature of a 'sketch.'"[9]

If one compares Stauffacher's programming with Amos Vogel's at Cinema 16, the other preeminent American film society of the era, additional dimensions of both programmers' goals and strategies become more obvious. Of course, Stauffacher and Vogel saw their missions as ideologically similar and practically related: each was an important resource for the other. But their senses of the film history they wanted their series to reflect and the practical realities they needed to deal with reveal important differences. On the practical side, the most crucial difference is probably that Vogel made Cinema 16 his livelihood and the sole focus of his attention, while for Stauffacher

Art in Cinema was an activity he did, in addition not only to his own filmmaking but to supporting himself as a commercial artist, which he seems to have hated. As Cinema 16 grew more successful, Vogel became busier and busier with Cinema 16 *and* financially secure. Stauffacher, on the other hand, stopped working as a commercial artist so that he could make his own films, and he and Barbara struggled financially for some of the years when Art in Cinema was functioning (see my conversation with Barbara Stauffacher Solomon).

Insofar as programming itself was concerned, Vogel's particular commitment to film history led him to present a variety of forms of film-making that seem to have held no particular interest for Stauffacher: scientific films from a variety of fields, for example. In general, Cinema 16 was at least as committed to documentary as to avant-garde film, and Vogel's balance of these two cinematic arenas created the particular Cinema 16 audience dynamic. At Art in Cinema, *art* and *artistic experiment* were the foci, and those documentaries Stauffacher showed tended to be those traditionally identified with both documentary and avant-garde history, such as the European City Symphonies he presented in Art in Cinema's first series and *A Propos de Nice* (1928) by Jean Vigo; classics of the poetic documentary like *Song of Ceylon* (1934) by Basil Wright and *Vinden Fran Vaster* (The West Wind, 1943) by Arne Sucksdorff; and documentaries about artists, like Henri Stork's *Le Monde de Paul Delvaux* (The World of Paul Delvaux, 1947).

Further, Vogel was interested not just in the artistic or the experimentally innovative, but in the forbidden. Early on, Cinema 16 became a membership society specifically in order to avoid the New York censors. For Vogel, the presentation of such outrageous films as George Franju's *The Blood of the Beasts* (*Sang des bêtes*, 1949) and Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947) was a Cinema 16 high point. Indeed, Vogel's predilection for the edgy, the bizarre, even the horrific seems to have been an important audience lure at Cinema 16—and, at least in a few cases, a cause for rebellion. P. Adams Sitney has indicated that for some film-goers (including himself) Cinema 16 had the aura of a circus sideshow.[10] Stauffacher, as the "Art in Cinema" moniker suggests, was less inclined to focus on the forbidden, though he certainly didn't hesitate to show films that might be expected to offend the sensibilities of some members of his audience.

Stauffacher didn't compile information about the kind of people Art in Cinema drew, though he learned something of their attitudes from their responses on questionnaires. A note on a questionnaire from Eliot Finkels, for example, argues that *The Potted Psalm* (1947) by James Broughton and Sidney Peterson was "a perfect example of how to misuse the camera, how to misinterpret dream sequences & the subconscious, a perfect waste of hard-to-get film, & an excellent way to insult an intelligent audience." That Finkels was hardly alone in his response to *The Potted Psalm* is clear in Broughton's memory of the November 1, 1946, screening, where his film met with "boos of bewilderment."[11]

Some of those who attended screenings remember them well. In her autobiography, in draft as this is written, Barbara Stauffacher, who was a young art student during the early Art in Cinema years, recalls the audience this way:

> The audience was the best part of the performance. Berkeley professors with tweed jackets and frumpy wives … arrived early to get good seats. Architects and their dates, high-styled with expensive haircuts, dressed in black-and-white, or grey, or black-and-grey, looked for seats near each other or rich looking, potential clients. Young lawyers arrived in three-piece suits with ladies in pearls and little black dresses. The Woman's Board of the Museum, socialites, and rich blondes devoted to the arts, and Frank, wore cashmere sweaters, Pre-Columbian jewelry, and pageboys, and walked as if they owned the place and their gay escorts. Pretty young women, recently graduated from Art Appreciation 101, who had practiced how to eat hamburgers without smudging their lipstick, looked for sensitive young men. Artists on the GI Bill, recently attacking the Axis, instead of big canvasses, jazz musicians, and poets arrived late, wore black turtlenecks and Levis, and slinked into the remaining seats or slumped against the walls.… It was a pity to turn the lights off.[12]

Barbara Stauffacher also provides a picture of Stauffacher that is in tune with her sense of the audience:

> Frank loved parties. Every night was a different party.
>
> Friday nights, Art in Cinemas were his parties. As the audience gathered, Frank slipped into an invisible door in one of the galleries to climb up the narrow iron spiral stairway to the projection

> booth high under the rotunda's entablature. He held cans of 16mm films in one hand, a pitcher of chilled martinis he'd gotten from the bartender across the street in the other, and a martini glass in his teeth. He'd already screened the films, organized the programs, had announcements printed and mailed, written program notes, and selected music.

While Art in Cinema privileged forms of cinema made outside contemporary Hollywood, Stauffacher was not simplistically doctrinaire. His commitment at Art in Cinema was to provide opportunities for seeing films more challenging than "the Hollywood fantasies," but this did not keep him from recognizing that filmmakers working in the industry in his own era were also capable of levels of creative expression that were as fully ignored by the mass audience, and even by the industry itself, as any of the obscure experiments that found their way into Art in Cinema programs.

The longest hiatus between Art in Cinema series was between the spring 1951 series and the fall 1952 series. During this eighteen-month period, Stauffacher finished *Notes on the Port of St. Francis*, then joined Barbara Stauffacher, who was pregnant, in Europe. They were in London for the birth of their daughter Chloe, then lived in New York for a time, while Frank tried to find work, and in one instance worked for the U.S. Department of State, curating a photography show about American commercial directors that apparently toured Europe (I have not been able to locate details about this show). When he became ill with a brain tumor, he and Barbara and Chloe moved back to San Francisco, where Stauffacher had his first brain operation in 1953. As he recovered from this operation, he worked at bringing accomplished commercial directors to Art in Cinema. On October 2, 1953, Art in Cinema hosted director George Stevens, who presented an illustrated talk about his work. The success of this event led to the final two seasons of Stauffacher's career as programmer.

A two-part series called "Aspects of the American Film: The Work of Fifteen Directors," a spin-off of Stauffacher's work for the State Department, was organized for the spring and fall of 1954. Films by major Hollywood directors (and by non-Hollywood makers whose work was widely seen) were presented and represented, either by the directors themselves, or by other directors/producers close to their work. Fred Zinnemann, Vincent Minnelli, Gene Kelly, William Wellman, and Frank Capra represented their own work; Rouben Mamoulian presented D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916), Willard Van Dyke presented Pare Lorentz's work as well as his own; Merian C. Cooper presented Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran* (1934), and excerpts from his own *Grass* (1925) and *Chang* (1927); Mitchel Leisen presented Cecil B. DeMille's *The Crusades* (1935) and an excerpt from *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942), and Stephen Bosustow discussed animations by the U.P.A. Studio, which he founded. Stauffacher explained in an early description of "Aspects of the American Film," "This treatment of the American film has been patterned after a large circulating exhibition designed for the Smithsonian Institution and the U. S. Department of State a few years ago by this writer. Made to circulate abroad, it sought to show some of the really positive achievements in the American film."

Stauffacher recognized that some of his audience might see his attention to accomplished Hollywood directors as an abandonment of his commitment to the avant-garde. But he argued that during "these nine years of outstanding programs, no stringent policy has existed but that of being concerned with what is worth your [the Art in Cinema audience's] interest in the film. True, our programs grew out of the avant-garde, but there is only so much avant-garde available." From Stauffacher's point of view, recognizing the artistry of the commercial directors he showed was not only part of his mission, but related to his avant-garde sensibility, since even the best Hollywood directors were rarely, in the mid-1950s, accorded the status of *artists*. Indeed, judging from some the directors' comments, Stauffacher's presentation of them and their films at "*Art* in Cinema" felt risky. Barbara Stauffacher, who worked closely with her husband on "Aspects of the American Film," remembers Fred Zinnemann saying, "God forbid my producers ever hear I'm doing something that has anything to do with the word *art*! They'll fire me!" (see the interview with Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, pp. 243–244).

"Aspects of the American Film" was the concluding chapter in Stauffacher's career as a curator, and its considerable success obscured the fact of Stauffacher's fast-failing health. In Stauffacher's Art in Cinema correspondence, there is virtually no mention of the surgeries; his weakened condition is never, even implicitly, used as an explanation for slow responses to letters.

Indeed, until near the end, Stauffacher carried on in his public role at the Art in Cinema screenings, despite his failing health. Barbara Stauffacher recalls an incident following Frank Capra's presentation on October 22, 1954: "After his talk, Capra, his wife, Frank, and I went for a drink to Tosca's on Columbus Avenue. They were staying at the Fairmont Hotel. We were walking across the lobby when Frank had a seizure.… Frank lay on the ground shaking. We kneeled around him. Then, Frank Capra picked Frank up in his arms as he might a sick child, carried him outside, and put him into the green Mercury I'd bought for $250."[13]

By August of 1955, after a second brain operation, at the age of thirty-nine, Stauffacher was dead (he was born August 13, 1916). Although various Bay Area film series during the following years used the Art in Cinema name, the energy and excitement of Stauffacher's Art in Cinema programs would not be revived in the area until the 1960s. In a letter to Barbara Stauffacher soon after Stauffacher's death, Amos Vogel sang Stauffacher's praises, focusing on what may have been Stauffacher's most remarkable qualities as programmer, his decency and his diplomacy:

> Those of us who knew Frank intimately have lost a true and rare friend, a true and rare human being. In an industry with more than the usual share of cut-throats and slick businessmen, he was the one and only person I knew who had no enemies; the only person, in fact, about whom nothing bad or negative or unpleasant was said behind his back. His integrity, devotion to his life's work and his sincerity were too transparent to be misunderstood by even the most narrow-minded. He pioneered in this field and set standards for all of us, Cinema 16 included.[14]

Design of This Volume

This documentation of Art in Cinema was initiated by Robert Haller of Anthology Film Archives in New York City, who explored the Art in Cinema files and then, in July 1989, proposed a book on Art in Cinema to Edith Kramer, director of the Pacific Film Archive. At some point during the late 1980s or early 1990s, I learned of Haller's interest in this project, during a conversation with him about my own documentation of Cinema 16. At the time, I was becoming dubious about the possibility of finding a publisher for my project (*Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society* had been accepted for publication by U.M.I. Research Press and announced in the summer 1989 catalogue, only to be abruptly canceled during the reorganization of the press, and it had been rejected by a variety of other presses). I found solace in the fact that at least one other scholar of independent cinema believed in the need to document not only the histories of those organizations that had established and maintained public spaces for the remarkable history of independent cinema, but also the individual men and women who had labored to create them. As I was doing my research on Cinema 16, I had, like Haller, come to the conclusion that if documenting Cinema 16 were worthwhile, a comparable documentation of the film series that helped to inspire Vogel's efforts would also be valuable.

When Ruth Bradley, editor of *Wide Angle*, published a substantial portion of the Cinema 16 documentation in two double issues in January and April 1997, and indicated her enthusiasm for continuing to use *Wide Angle* to document institutional histories crucial to the development and maintenance of independent media culture, I contacted Haller and asked him about the state of his Art in Cinema project. He indicated that he had made a selection of documents from the Art in Cinema files, but had become so busy with other projects, relating to his work as director of Collections and Special Projects at Anthology Film Archives in New York, that he despaired of finding the time to finish the Art in Cinema project. Haller expressed a willingness to turn his selection of materials over to me, if I were interested in seeing the project into publication. He gave me his materials in 1998.

In exploring the very useful selection Haller had made, I realized that there were dimensions of Art in Cinema that needed to be more fully represented, and I made contact with Kathy Geritz, film curator at Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, where the Art in Cinema materials are housed. Geritz examined the files and sent me a supplementary selection of materials that filled some of the gaps I had discovered in Haller's selection.

Finally, in the summer of 1999, I visited the Bay Area to explore the Art in Cinema files myself. With the assistance of Pacific Film Archive librarian Nancy Goldman, I examined the several boxes

of Art in Cinema materials (using the "Guide to the Archives of Art in Cinema Series Pacific Film Archive Collection," compiled by Marci Hoffman in the fall of 1989). I found a considerable variety of useful materials that I added to Haller's original selection and Geritz's supplement. I also talked with Jack Stauffacher and with Barbara Stauffacher Solomon. Later on, I talked with Jordan Belson, one of the filmmakers whose work Stauffacher championed at Art in Cinema. I only wish I had begun this project earlier, when other filmmakers who knew Stauffacher and whose films Stauffacher presented were still alive.

When Temple University Press agreed to publish the Art in Cinema manuscript, we decided that this volume would be presented as a companion to *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society*: that is, it would use a comparable moniker, its organization and design would be based on the earlier volume, and there would be a variety of intersections between the two histories (though as little repetition as possible). Indeed, in this introduction I have avoided, insofar as has been practical, repeating information presented in the introduction to the earlier volume and recommend that the reader interested in a more detailed history of the film society movement refer to *Cinema 16*.

I have arranged the Art in Cinema documentation in chronological order. My goal is not simply to present the documents, but to provide a sense of the life of Stauffacher's film society. I have restricted the documentation to the years when Stauffacher himself was curator of Art in Cinema and have arranged the various materials so that the reader can get a sense of the various activities by Stauffacher and others that were required to develop and maintain the Art in Cinema experience. I have tended to privilege letters and other materials that seem of historical import and, whenever possible, to include letters to and from filmmakers and critics who continued to play a significant role in alternative film history. Since most readers were born long after Stauffacher's Art in Cinema ceased to function, I have, in many instances, included explanatory textual comments (in italics).

A complete listing of the film events announced in advance by Art in Cinema is included, and in all cases but two we have reproduced the flyers announcing the annual series (I have not been able to locate a copy of the announcement for the eighth series or a reproducible copy of the third series). A sampling of the Art in Cinema program notes, compiled and/or written for each program by Stauffacher, is also included. I have chosen to focus on the series *as they were announced*, since this provides a sense of Stauffacher's vision for Art in Cinema during each particular series. But Stauffacher was a flexible programmer, in part because he had to be—independent distribution being what it was in the 1940s and early 1950s—and in part because he seems to have felt that it was his job to respond to what he knew was going on around him. Instances where the announced program was changed by the time of the actual presentation—sometimes only a few weeks later—are not hard to find.

A particularly dramatic example is the September 24, 1948, program. In the series announcement, Stauffacher indicates that four Hans Richter films will be shown, along with "two fragments of work in progress: John Whitney's form and synthetic sound; Albert King's production, with Frank Collins and Don Myers of *Moonlight Sonata*," plus Elwood Dekker's *Light Modulator*, Luciano Emmer and Enrico Gras's *Racconto da un Affresco*, Ernest Beadle's *In the Sea*, Vladimir Nilsen's *The Brazen Horseman*, and "a dance film by Sydney Peterson and Hy Hirsh of Marian van Tuyl's *Clinic for the Study of Stumble*." The program notes for the September 24th screening begin with an announcement:

> Tonight's program will be without several films originally scheduled and announced, one of them being the *Racconto da un Affresco* of Luciano Emmer and Enrico Gras. This film, as well as one other by Emmer and Gras on Hieronymus Bosch, has been mysteriously withheld by the Italian consulate in Canada without explanation. It is a circumstance beyond our control. When these films are again available, they will be shown at a special Art in Cinema program, free to you as subscribers to this present series. An announcement will be forthcoming. [Four films by Emmer and Gras, including *Racconto da un Affresco*, were part of the fifth series.]

The material from the works in progress by John Whitney and Albert King are also absent from the program, as are the Dekker film, the Beadle film, the Nilsen film, and one of the Richter films (*Filmstudie*). The new program includes five unannounced films: Viking Eggeling's *Symphonie Diagonale*, Oskar Fischinger's *Motion Painting No. 1*, Ralph Steiner's H_20, Chaplin's *The Pawn Shop*, and a film by Harry Smith called *Primitive Visual Rhythm*, dated 1947–1948.[15]

The catalogue *Art in Cinema* (presented here as a facsimile through the gracious permission of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) includes revised versions of Art in Cinema's program notes for the first year's presentations (I have included several of the original program notes for this first series so that the reader can have a sense of how the catalogue evolved from the original presentations).

Insofar as possible, we have done our best to provide accurate texts of the letters to and from Stauffacher, Foster, and others who worked with Art in Cinema, and to present them with enough graphic variety to suggest the original letters without allowing the book to become too busy. We have justified margins left and have placed regularized versions of addresses, dates, and signatures on the left, regardless of how the writers presented them. We have generally retained the writers' idiosyncrasies of grammar, usage, capitalization, and spelling, in order to provide readers with a more complete sense of the period during which Art in Cinema was active—except when an idiosyncrasy of spelling would be likely to cause confusion; then we have corrected it. We have normalized punctuation and spacing between words. When letters, or additions to letters, are handwritten, we have indicated this with *[hw]*, and when we have abridged a complex letterhead, as we have done in most instances, we have used […] in the heading. Inevitably, I have worked in some instances with original letters (generally, letters *to* Stauffacher) and in others (generally, letters *from* Stauffacher and his colleagues) with copies. In the case of the copies, it is not always possible to determine how a letter was signed: when I am clear about who signed a letter, but not how the letter was signed, I have placed the name of the sender in italicized brackets. Finally, permission to reprint letters is indicated at the end of each text. All program notes and flyers for Art in Cinema are reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

Notes

1. In the third chapter of his *French Cinema: The First Wave 1915–1929* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), Richard Abel provides a valuable overview of the development of the film society movement in France. See also my introduction to *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), pp. 1–26.

2. In 1972, *The Film Society Programs, 1925–1939* (New York: Arno Press) was published. The volume includes a complete listing of the films shown by the London Film Society, along with the contextualizing information offered to audiences.

3. So far as I know, the particular nature and accomplishments of Symon Gould's Film Guild remain to be documented and explored.

4. Haidee Wasson reviews the early history of the Museum of Modern Art film library in "'Some Kind of Racket': The Museum of Modern Art's Film Library, Hollywood and the Problem of Film Art, 1935," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 5–29; and in *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

5. Haller's filmography is included in the catalogue *Jim Davis: The Flow of Energy* (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1992), edited by Haller.

6. See David Fisher, "Two Premieres: Disney and UPA," in *The American Animated Cartoon*, ed. Danny Peary and Gerald Peary (New York: Dutton, 1980), pp. 178–182.

7. See Smith's note for *No. 5* in *The Film-makers' Cooperative Catalogue, No. 7*. I am also assuming here that the *No. 5* listed in this catalogue is the same *No. 5* presented at Art in Cinema.

8. See, for example, Tom Gunning, "An Unseen Energy Swallows Space: The Space in Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film," in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 355–366; and Bart Testa, *Back and Forth: Early Cinema and the Avant-Garde* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1992), a catalogue for a film series presented at the Art Gallery of Ontario, April 24–May 17, 1992. See also my own *Avant-Garde Film/Motion Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

9. Letter from Stauffacher to Vogel, January 6, 1951, included in MacDonald, *Cinema 16*, p. 174.

10. The formation of the New American Cinema Group, which came to be represented most obviously by Jonas Mekas, had in part to do with the desire to see filmmakers accorded the dignity of a less sensational screening situation than Cinema 16 had to offer.

11. Broughton remembers the Art in Cinema screening in his *Making Light of It* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1992), pp. 1–2. That this screening is the focus of the opening paragraphs of Broughton's reminiscence suggests the importance of Art in Cinema to aspiring filmmakers.

12. Jordan Belson also remembers Art in Cinema presentations as both artistic and social occasions. See my conversation with Belson on pp. 173–175.

13. From Barbara Stauffacher Solomon's unpublished manuscript.

14. Letter to Barbara Stauffacher [Solomon] from Amos Vogel, April 22, 1955.

15. The program notes include this description by Smith: "The forms used in this film have been limited to two classifications: a circle (or circles) moving across the field of vision, and a stationary circle segmenting itself on its own axis. These two simple actions are arranged in a slowly accelerating rhythmic series, with angular movements and highly saturated colors in the body of the film, replacing and being replaced by oblique movement and a grayed spectrum at the beginning and end of the work." I'm not positive whether this film is one of those currently in distribution.

The Documents

Conversation with Jack Stauffacher, 8/14/99

[Jack Stauffacher is an accomplished, nationally known letterpress printer/book designer. His Greenwood Press in San Francisco publishes high-quality, limited-edition books.]

MacDonald: What possessed your brother to start Art in Cinema?

Stauffacher: Frank was always interested in film. He was interested in the arts—writers, poets, painters. And he always studied films. He was interested in British documentary in the 1930s. And he was a Hitchcock fan in those days.

Before the war he got a scholarship to study art at the Art Center school in Los Angeles, and lived in Los Angeles in the mid-thirties, where he was surrounded by the film world. He got involved in set-designing classes and became more serious about making film. When he came back from LA, he started to work for the Paterson and Hall advertising agency. But his interest in film continued; it was a part of him.

I can't put my finger on how exactly Art in Cinema started, but I can set the stage. There was a special atmosphere in San Francisco at the time. After the war these eager young veterans came back, searching, thinking, feeling a responsibility to reshape the world. Their experiences during the war had made a profound mark on them. The city seemed alive with art—cinema, painting, poetry, jazz. You don't create in a vacuum. You create around like-minded spirits. That was a unique moment for the creative artist in San Francisco. People were asking questions. Out of it came some amazing things. Frank was overwhelmed with his desire to be involved in this atmosphere, and with cinema. It just seemed to blossom naturally in him.

MacDonald: At what point did he start working for the Museum of Art?

Stauffacher: They never really hired him. Film was foreign to the museum. They did put on programs of documentary films about art, but it was never the kind of thing Frank did. He just asked the museum if they would like to have some more creative film programs, and they said yes. They gave him very little to work with. He had to struggle. He did it by sheer enthusiasm—and with the help of good people around him.

They sold tickets and were successful in the sense that they made enough to pay the projectionist and the printing of the programs. And the director of the museum, Dr. Grace Morley, liked Frank very much, and was very supportive (these days, directors of museums are basically businessmen trying to connect with rich people, but Dr. Morley was something special). For Frank it was a labor of love.

MacDonald: So far as I know, Frank was the first programmer in the United States who saw avant-garde film as something like a coherent history. He's the first person to gear a whole series of events toward that particular history. Do you know when he was first seeing experimental work?

Stauffacher: No, I don't, and I don't know why he was interested in *experimental* film. It was just his probing mind, I think. But once he got the sense of experimental film, he wanted to track it down and look at it at every opportunity.

MacDonald: As I remember, the first program was listed as having been done by Frank and Richard Foster.

Stauffacher: Richard Foster played an important part early on. He was basically the PR man and a very intelligent, very nice man. He was a person who could go out and get things moving. Frank was the person who was putting the programs together. Richard learned from Frank, and helped Frank on the PR level, meeting people, making connections.

Illustration 2. Jack Stauffacher's cover for the catalogue *Art in Cinema.* Courtesy Jack Stauffacher.

MacDonald: He was only involved for one year?

Stauffacher: Yes, it wasn't too long.

MacDonald: What was your role early on?

Stauffacher: I printed the first program. I've been a printer since 1934.

MacDonald: Did you print the catalogue that was published after the first year?

Stauffacher: I designed it and had another person, next door to my shop, print it. I think it's a valuable document. We had Henry Miller write the introduction.

I disliked the original cover, so I designed a replacement and used it on a hundred or so copies that hadn't gone out.

MacDonald: One of the reasons that I'm so interested in the history of Art in Cinema, Cinema 16, and the other film societies is their effect on film-*making*. Once an audience for avant-garde work had been created, filmmakers realized there was some reason, beyond their own pleasure, to *make* work.

Illustration 3. Jack Stauffacher playing a photograph of Father in James Broughton's *Mother's Day* (1948). Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

Stauffacher: Art in Cinema produced an energy and a creative space that young people could go to and realize, "Hey, I want to experiment like *that*." They were influenced by a lot of the things they saw, and by the fact that a lot of unknown filmmakers were doing their work, interesting work, outside of the industry. Art in Cinema gave these unknowns a chance to have their work looked at by a large group of people. There were some pretty wild evenings there. It was always crowded.

MacDonald: From the beginning?

Stauffacher: From the beginning. It cost just a dollar to get in. And the audience was very serious about learning, about studying experimental film from all over the world (which in those days, I guess, was primarily Europe).

MacDonald: Cinema 16 was famous for audiences bursting into debate, sometimes in the middle of the screenings. Amos Vogel divided his programming, roughly, between documentary history and experimental history. Many of the Cinema 16 members who were interested in documentary hated experimental films, and the experimental people often hated the documentaries. Frank also showed a range of films, but he specialized in experimental film so I assume he didn't really have two different sensibilities coming together. What do you remember about the Art in Cinema audience?

Stauffacher: The audience was very respectful and curious. There *would* be outbursts of "What's going on *here*?" And at other times they would clap enthusiastically. I don't remember much debate. You could feel the audience was totally absorbed in many of the films that Frank showed.

You know, almost everybody who went to Art in Cinema wore ties. They took care with their dress. It wasn't anything like screenings now. It was more polite. They were not philistines; they were the creative spirit of San Francisco.

MacDonald: Were there particular experimental films that you remember as creating powerful moments, or that created a lot of enthusiasm?

Stauffacher: I don't remember, actually. Frank did show various types of film. He loved the "poetic documentary," especially the English School. He showed a good, lively mix. It wasn't *all* abstract animation by Harry Smith or Jordan Belson.

When Frank could bring a filmmaker, the filmmaker would usually get up and say a few words about the film. And Frank would always introduce the program. He was very good at that.

MacDonald: He was able to maintain Art in Cinema for a long time, not making any money doing it.

Stauffacher: Not making a penny! All the filmmakers were broke, too. But it was a wonderful experience.

Letter to Arthur Rosenheimer Jr. from Richard Foster, 7/31/46

31 July 1946

Mr. Arthur Rosenheimer, Jr.
Museum of Modern Art Film Library
11 East 33d Street, N.Y.C.

Dear Mr. Rosenheimer,

You have received my wire by now, and I hope it hasn't been too much of a shock to you. You see, we learned more about the field in a three day trip to Hollywood this last week end than we had learned in the previous six months. Frank Stauffacher, who is editing the museum catalogue for the series, his brother Jack Stauffacher who is printing the catalogue, and I, made the trip. It was very fruitful in a number of ways.

We interviewed Man Ray, Luis Bunuel, Oskar Fischinger, and John and James Whitney, all of whom are writing original essays for our catalogue. Bunuel has promised to give us an analysis of LE CHIEN ANDALOU which he says has never before been written. The other three are giving us unpublished material. In addition, the Whitney brothers and Fischinger are renting us their entire extant works for special showings. We are also writing up the interviews with these five artists, to be included in the catalogue. The contrast between the pessimism re the cinema as an art form shown by the three Europeans—Fischinger, Bunuel, and Man Ray (who is certainly European in outlook), and the optimism of the Whitney Brothers was striking. The first three are somewhat bitter toward Hollywood's commercialism, and lack of artistic integrity. The Whitney brothers accept that factor as given, and pursue an independant course. Their workshop, in a Frank Lloyd Wright house in Aline Barnsdall's Olive Hill park is in itself an experience. If you can come to Hollywood—as Jay Leyda told us you might, in August—we would certainly recommend a visit to these important and stimulating brothers.

Bunuel is going to Mexico soon to make a film, but if you are here in August you can probably catch him. Incidentally, Bunuel asked to be remembered to Iris Barry when we wrote. He pronounced it "Eerees Bahris," and we had quite a time figuring it out. He is a rich and sincere personality, and his lack of knowledge of English is more than compensated for by his intense gesticulating.

We also saw Clara Grossman of the American Contemporary Galleries (or rather, "Gallery") in Hollywood, and she gave us a great deal of information about the film field, and introduced us to Jay Leyda. Leyda was the best informed person we had met in the field, and both Miss Grossman and Man Ray said that he was one of the best authorities in the world on avant-garde films.

We pooled our own insufficient knowledge with that of Leyda, and considerably expanded the program. In brief, we have tried to organize the series around a conception of the cinema as a medium of expression for modern art forms—surrealist, non-objective, abstract, etc. etc., with both "pure" examples of a given art trend (such as Fischinger as a non-objectivist), and examples of films directly or indirectly influenced by these modern art forms (such as "Million Dollar Legs," surely a Hollywood product influenced by surrealism. This particular one was suggested by Leyda. What do you think of it?)

Our purpose for showing the series has become clarified, and we can summarize the various reasons thus:

1. To show the relation between other modern art forms—painting, sculpture, architecture, literature—and the cinema as a modern art form. Since the San Francisco Museum is primarily

interested in contemporary art, which in turn implies modern art—which is increasingly non-objective, abstract, semi-surrealistic in the San Francisco region—this film series will attempt to summarize the use of the film as a means of expression of these twentieth century movements in art.

2. To show the possibilities of the cinema as an art form as distinguished from the Hollywood commercial films. This distinction has never been made clear to San Francisco audiences, and our catalogue will attempt to clearly distinguish "entertainment" movies from more serious attempts at creating a new medium of artistic expression.

3. To create an interest in the cinema as serious art, in the hope that we can finance and build a small theater devoted to such films. (We have preliminary plans for such a theater.)

4. To give a clear picture of the conflicting, often opposing forces operating in modern art generally; as Leyda put it, this series can be a reflection of many of the "background forces" of modern art; Freud and the sub-conscious, scientific techniques, revolutionary social philosophies, etc. This latter point has been especially significant in organizing this series of programs. You will see this as the underlying logic of the development of the series.

Now for the tentative program. We hope it is the final one. Of course, we still have to obtain several of the films from diverse sources, and there is a large question mark after some of them. The scattered distribution methods of these films make it almost impossible to arrange such a comprehensive series, but we hope that we will be successful.

You will note in the programs that we have selected films from your catalogue that are coupled with other films, such as CALIGARI. However, we are willing to rent the entire set coupled with the films we want—using only those that are listed in our program. This will increase our rental fees for the series, but we can bear this increased cost in the interest of rounding out the program.

We have only a 16mm projector at the museum, so this limits us. However, in your letter of June 5, 1946, you say that you have EMAK BAKIA and THE SKELETON DANCE in 16mm, while in your letter of July 23, 1946, you say you have them only in 35mm. We want them both in 16mm if possible. Also we would like to ask if you could undertake to reduce some of the 35mm films we are requesting to 16mm; perhaps we could work out an arrangement whereby you increase the rental fee to us to help defray the expense of printing. You have probably never had to deal with so difficult a group, but we are learning as we go and only now have we begun to clarify our motives and intentions. Please bear with us. If we could talk directly with you, and clarify our objectives verbally, it would help us both in arriving at a workable plan.

Now for the tentative series plan. You will notice that we have titled each night's series, or program, and that there is now some logic in the development. We want your criticism. Please be direct, as our feelings are not involved. You will note that METROPOLIS is out. Your criticism was correct about the film. It did not belong in the series.

I have underlined those in red which will come from you. And I have put a question mark before those we are uncertain of obtaining from other sources.

SEPT. 27	PRECURSORS	
	TRIP TO THE MOON	Melies
	ONESIME HOROLOGER	Durand
	JOYEUX MICROBES	Cohl
	SLIPPERY JIM	Zecca
	CABINET OF DR CALIGARI	Wiene
	COQUILLE ET CLERGYMAN	Dulac
OCT. 4	FRENCH AVANT-GARDE	
	EMAK BAKIA	Man Ray
	L'ETOILE DE MER	Man Ray
	ANAEMIC CINEMA	Duchamp
	BALLET MECHANIQUE	Leger
	ENTR' ACTE	Clair
	CHIEN ANDALOU	Bunuel
	MENILMONTANT	Kirsanov

	[hw] SMILING MADAME BEUDET BEUDET	Dulac
OCT. 11	CONTINENTAL AVANT-GARDE	
	BERLIN	Ruttmann
	RHYTHMUS 21	Richter
	RAIN	Ivens
	HANDS	Stella Simon
	? UBERFALL	Metzner
	plus any of Egglings work that we can get ahold of … ???	
OCT. 18	OSKAR FISCHINGER: NON-OBJECTIVE FORM SYNCHRONIZED WITH SOUND	
	STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE No. 5	Fischinger
	" " " " " No. 6	"
	" " " " " No. 7	"
	" " " " " No. 8	"
	" " " " " No. 9	"
	" " " " " No. 10	"
	" " " " " No. 11	"
	" " " " " No. 12	"
	COLORATURA (Black & white)	"
	COMPOSITION IN BLUE (Color)	"
	ALLEGRETTO (Color)	"
	STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER (Color)	"
OCT. 25	THE ANIMATED FILM AS AN ART FORM	
	FLAT HATTING	Hubley (United Film Production)
	SKELETON DANCE	Disney
	? Other Disney's if possible, by writing him direct.	
	DRAME CHEZ LES FANTOCHES	Cohl
	GERTIE THE DINOSAUR	McCay
	? NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN	Alexieoff
	? Films by Len Lye	
	? Films by Norman McClaren	
	? SYMPHONIE DIAGONALE	Eggling
NOV. 1	CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILM IN AMERICA	
	? SYNCHRONIZATION	Butte (with Joseph Schillinger)
	? Films by Douglas Crockwell	
	? Anais Nin scenario by Maya Deren	
	EXERCISE NO. 1	John & James Whitney
	" NO. 2	" " "
	" NO. 3	" " "
	" NO. 4	" " "
	Except for the Whitney films, this is so far our weakest program.	
NOV. 8	FANTASY INTO DOCUMENTARY	
	RIEN QUE LES HEURES	Cavalcanti
	THE CITY	Steiner
	NEW EARTH	Ivens

NOV. 15 THE FANTASTIC EYE: EXPERIMENTS IN THE FANTASTIC AND THE MACABRE

FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER — Epstein
RHYTHM IN LIGHT (Brandon)

We need a few more on this one. CALIGARI really belongs here but we felt it more important as a precursor. What could you suggest? We can get THE ETERNAL MASK from Brandon on 16mm, but we are uncertain if it's really important enough, or if it would make the program too long, with USHER.

NOV. 22 HOLLYWOOD AND SURREALISM

HIS BREAD AND BUTTER — Sennett
MILLION DOLLAR LEGS

NOV. 29 HANS RICHTER PROGRAM

We hope to get a collected study of Richter's work from Richter himself, including the one he is now working on, if it is possibly available by the time this program comes around. If not we'll have to get a substitute.

Well, that's the plan. As you can see, it has quite a few gaps, but inasmuch as all the correspondence we have sent out within the past few days re these "Question films" we hope to [get] is as yet unanswered, we have high hopes. Perhaps many of the selections will be questionable to you in the light of the groupings we have given them. If so, don't hesitate to say so: we will welcome it.

We also thought it would be complete and comprehensive to work out a small exhibition of stills to hang in the museum concurrently with this film series. The idea was suggested by some of the studies and working drawings used by the Whitney brothers in producing their abstract films. It seemed to us that an exhibition of this sort would be extremely interesting. We could use anything in the way of stills, from any of the films from you that we are going to use. We can get stills also from Fischinger. We are quite interested in this possibility, and would like to hear from you on it.

Incidentally, we talked with Fischinger about his work being in your Library, or rather, not being in your library. In view of the fact that he is one of the few producers of abstract films that has kept up a consistent production over a long period of time, we considered it strange. He explained the circumstances involved at the time he had received a request from the MofMA's Film Library regarding his films. He was under a sort of obligation, at the time, not to sell other copies of his films. However he now feels that it was a mistake to turn your request down. If you're still interested, we feel sure that he would be too. Only one reservation: He asked us to make it clear that he wished this matter to be kept unadvertised at the present, restricting it only to you and to us.

It has been rather painful to us after realizing the trouble you have already taken in arranging the program, to come back with this present one. We hope that you will bear with us. Our hope is to arrange as complete an experimental series as we possibly can. The further we went into this, the more difficult we found it. Production and ownership is so scattered and spasmodic. Apparently this is not a very common attempt. We certainly appreciate your cooperation, and hope that this plan, which is as final as we can make it, will not caused you undue trouble.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Foster

P.S. Oskar Fischinger's address is: 1010 Hammond Street
Hollywood, Calif.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

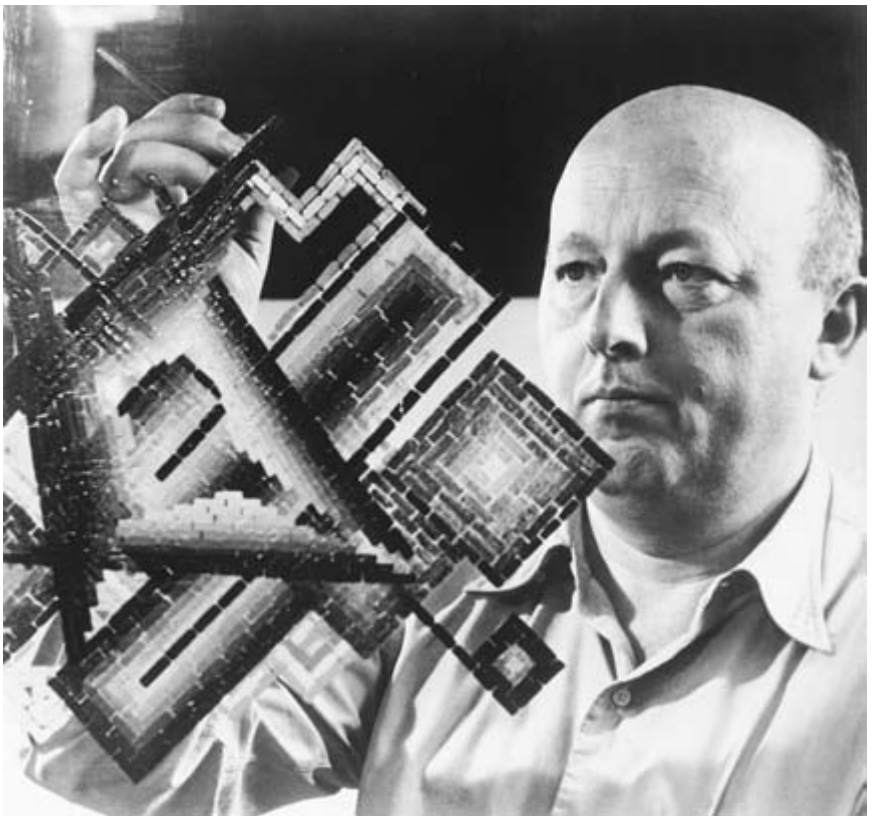

Illustration 4. Oscar Fischinger at work on *Motion Painting No. 1* (1947). Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive.

Letter to Lewis Jacobs from Frank Stauffacher, 8/1/46

August 1, 1946

Mr. Lewis C. Jacobs
333 N. Poinsetta Place
Hollywood, Cal.

Dear Mr. Jacobs,

The Museum, in collaboration with Mr. Douglas Mac Agy of the California School of Fine Arts and the avant-garde literary magazine "Circle," is attempting to arrange a fairly comprehensive series of experimental and avant-garde films to be shown from September 27 through Nov 29 of this year. The bulk of our material we are getting from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, but we've had to search elsewhere for good material of a contemporary nature, and we find this quite difficult. A trip to Hollywood last weekend resulted in our making an arrangement with Oskar Fischinger to include all of his available work, and we had the same good luck with John and James Whitney. We are greatly indebted to Jay Leyda for an interesting general discussion, and many specific suggestions. On the basis of these suggestions we have sent out considerable correspondence in search of hard-to-get items.

Leyda recommended our contacting you with a few of our questions. We had hoped to get in touch with you personally, but our time was limited. So we must content ourselves with this letter, and express our sincere appreciation for any information you might be able to give us.

Do you know if the film made by Mary Ellen Butte, with Joseph Schillinger, called SYNCHRONIZATION, is available? And if so, would you recommend it?

We cannot locate:

SYMPHONIE DIAGONALE	Viking Eggeling
UBERFALL	Erno Metzner
SEASHELL AND THE CLERGYMAN	Germaine Dulac

We are aware that Hilla Rebay at the Guggenheim Foundation in New York possesses a collection of purely non-objective film experiments, perhaps including the Eggeling work. But her collection is not available for either loan or rental. We have also attempted to contact Hans Richter whom we understand is preparing an anthology of this kind of film, besides the new one he is now directing. But so far, no answer.

Any information on these films that you could give us would be very much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Maya Deren from Frank Stauffacher, 8/2/46

2 August 1946

Maya Deren
61 Morton Street
New York 14, N.Y.

Dear Maya Deren,

I am working with Richard Foster in attempting to arrange a fairly comprehensive series of experimental films to be shown from Sept. 27 through Nov. 29. I believe he has already told you about it. We are running into a snag trying to locate contemporary work.

Your own films, which we saw several weeks ago, were very favorably received. The audience reaction was quite good, although the non-existence of a literary logic is what puzzles most people, even quite sophisticated people. It is natural, this reaction. We have so long been accustomed to expect films to proceed in a literary sequence. Your discussion of this in your essay The Film As An Art Form, in New Directions, was admirable.

Foster and I were in Hollywood last weekend, trying to round up both older and contemporary experimental work. We had interesting talks with Man Ray, Luis Bunuel, Jay Leyda, Oskar Fischinger, and John and James Whitney, among others. Fischinger and the Whitney brothers are working exclusively in non-objective directions. But aside from these two, if there [are] any experimental films being made today in America on a truly sincere artistic basis—excluding your work—they are certainly being kept top secret.

Our program is rounding out now, although it is still full of gaps. We are very curious about your latest film, the Anais Nin, and we are wondering if it might be ready for showing by the first of Nov.

Did Foster ask you if you could write a short statement for our pamphlet? We expect to get similar statements from Man Ray, Bunuel, Fischinger, and the Whitneys. Of course a series of films of the sort we are trying to gather together would hardly make sense without explanations and program notes. We felt that these individual statements would bring together some rich attitudes towards the contemporary experimental film. They will be about a thousand words. (each)

We would welcome any information on the progress of the Anais Nin film, and we wish you good luck on it, and future work.

Sincerely yours

Frank Stauffacher

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[The "Anais Nin film" Stauffacher is referring to is Ritual in Transfigured Time *(1946). See Deren's response in her letter of 8/2/46.]*

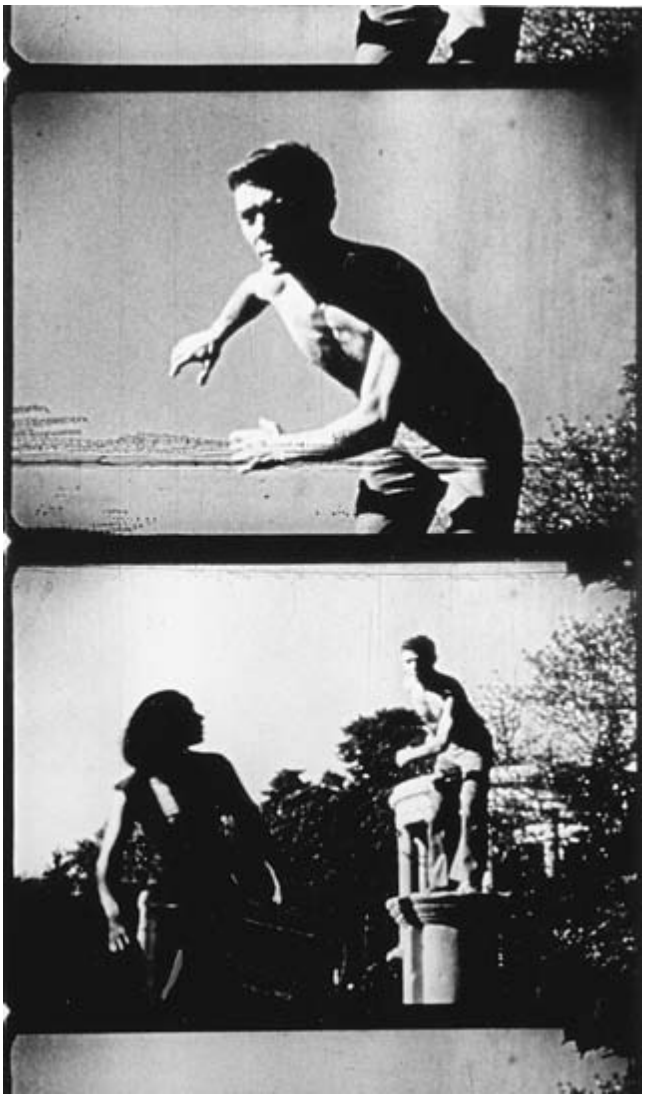

Illustration 5. Successive shots from Maya Deren's *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946). Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

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Letter to Richard Foster from Maya Deren, 8/2/46

August 2, 1946

Maya Deren
61 Morton Street
New York 14, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Foster,

We seem destined to have trouble making contact through the mails. As Miss Arsham has written you, I am not in New York at the moment, but out here in North Carolina finishing off a booklet on film and at the same time trying to rest a bit before tackling my next film. I feel very responsible about it, because it is the first time that the Guggenheim Foundation has given money for creative work in film, and if I make a mess of this film they may either retreat into the hole from which they

have timidly pushed their heads or all those who are subsequently refused money will blame it on my failure to put mine to good use.

For this reason I hope to be able to concentrate on the creative work from now on. And since I find it impossible, or at least distracting, to shift from a creative attitude of mind to a critical one and back and forth, I had hoped to avoid writing any critical essays after completing this booklet on film, in which I have tried to carefully incorporate all of my ideas and the logic by which I arrive at them. The booklet is in the form of an anagram on Art, Form and Film and consists of nine sections which are related in anagramatic order. The sections themselves also stand well by themselves and it was one of these sections which I thought might be used for the museum booklet and also, another one, for the Circle article. Or a small section—a central paragraph—could be taken from each section. If you think this is a good idea, I can send you a section or a typescript of the entire anagram to select from.

The booklet will not contain anything on the specific films which I have made; but I had intended to write a couple of pages of "program notes," so to speak, which I was going to have mimeographed to send out with my announcements in the fall. If you think this would be more appropriate for the museum booklet, I could try to write this in time for that publication.

I am very glad that airmailing the films to you worked out so well. It seems that they had not reached Hollywood in time, having been held up on the way from Oklahoma by a strike of Railway Express men. Consequently, it is no one's fault that the mess occurred, and certainly it is not yours. It is very nice of you to offer to pay the air-mailing cost since it came to $9.00 and some cents (I don't remember the cents), which is the same as what you paid to return them to New York by airmail. If you feel that the museum can stand the cost of that airmail postage, I would of course appreciate it since, as you can imagine, I operate on very small margins. Otherwise I am prepared to chalk it up as one of those losses which, in contracts, are referred to as an act of God. I appreciate your thoughtfullness, and leave it up to your discretion.

As I told you in the wire, Leite is welcome to use the still from Meshes which you mention. I intend to write him in a few days but thought I would mention it in the wire in case there is any deadline on it. In connection with the new film I have some other beautiful stills which could be used, at some other time. I am enclosing some information about the new film. You will notice that the acting credits go to Rita Christiani and Frank Westbrook, who are by far the leading performers in the film. In keeping with my principal that it is the film which, through its filmic totality, creates the emotional impact rather than the ability of any individual to "act" in the theatrical sense, I have not given any acting credits on any of the other films.

I compromised this principal to some extent in this last film, because both Miss Christiani and Mr. Westbrook are professional dancers and gave very much time and effort to the film without salary and it seemed that the least recompense they could have would be at least to have credit for their performances and whatever publicity would attend the film—as in the case of Talley Beatty in the dance film. Furthermore, the film was conceived around the personalities of both Miss Christiani and Mr. Westbrook (especially the former) so they have a personal relationship to it. In the case of Anais Nin, however, her role is so small that it would be unjust to credit it on the level of the other two; and furthermore, we intended to represent Anais as herself and so both she and I feel it would be deceptive to attach her name to it publicly. I have recently become aware that there is a general misconception about the role of Anais in this film, and we both feel that, both for her sake and for the film, it should be kept straight.

I notice that, in your letter, you do not speak much of "AT Land." While I do not intend to minimize "Meshes of The Afternoon," I feel that it's appeal is more based on a literary logic, that it lends itself to a symbolic interpretation which was not, incidently, intended, and, coming first on the program, leads one to expect the same in AT LAND. My own feeling is that AT LAND is a much better film since it moves by a directly visual integrity. We have become so accostumed to symbolisms that we find it difficult to comprehend directly but I feel that the direct, visual terms are more essentially the basis of film form. I deal with all this in my little booklet much more clearly so I won't go into it here. When you see the films again you will have read the booklet and perhaps have gotten a new slant on the whole problem.

Thank you again for your very sympathetic letter.

I do not know whether I shall be on the West Coast in the next year, but perhaps my new film will require me to go to warmer climates during the winter and I shall by all means be most anxious to meet you and your friends in Berkeley.

Sincerely yours,

Maya Deren *[hw]*

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[In the first paragraph, Deren is talking about her assistant and friend in the 1940s and 1950s, Miriam Arsham, who was seeing to Deren's affairs as she worked on the booklet An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film *(Yonkers, N.Y.: Alicat Book Shot Press [Out-Cast Chapbook Series, No. 9], 1946). The essay "The Camera As a Creative Medium," from that booklet, was reprinted in the Art in Cinema catalogue.*

I assume the film she feels so responsible about is Ritual in Transfigured Time. *George Leite, according to the Art in Cinema catalogue, "is the founder and editor of the West Coast's experimental literary magazine Circle. His interest in Art in Cinema is in line with his efforts to establish audiences for the new, the obscure and the experimental, in all fields of expression" (p. 102).]*

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Letter to James and John Whitney from Frank Stauffacher, 8/3/46

John and James Whitney
No. 1-8075
Barnsdall Park
Los Angeles, Calif.

3 Aug. 1946

Dear John and James Whitney,

We have finally arranged our ten weeks program, and unless the Museum of Modern Art Film Library balks at the way we have rearranged their original schedule for us, your films are planned for the evening of Nov. 1. On that date we are trying to show any really contemporary U.S. work that we can gather. You're at the head of this list. The rest of it is still awaiting confirmation. (Fischinger is booked on an evening all his own since he has enough for a full program).

We want to thank you again for the interesting morning we spent at your studio. Everyone whom we have told about it is eagerly looking forward to seeing your films.

Since our budget on this film project is not yet complete we have not arrived at a definite figure to pay you artists who are working full time in this type of work. In talking this over with Dr. Morley last Friday she expressed the desire to allow a maximum for you after we have determined the cost of the standard rentals from the Museum of Modern Art, Brandon, and other sources. We will be getting down to business with you on this in another letter, perhaps in a few weeks. In the meanwhile if there is anything you wish to tell us in this regard, why don't hesitate.

The idea for a show of stills and related material to run concurrently with our film series has been forming. We have written for all the appropriate stills we can get, but so far there is nothing definite on this either. In addition, we felt that an exhibition of paintings by those artists who are working with film, would tie the whole show together. Fischinger has some very excellent non-objective paintings, and we are asking him if he would care to have some of them exhibited along with the films. The museum can show a Leger, a Duchamp, and perhaps others that would be appropriate—since we are showing films by these artists also. Dick Foster suggested I ask if Jim would care to send any of his paintings. The relationship between the painting and the films would be interesting.

As to the exhibition of stills, we thought that we might have a few from each film—if possible. In your case, perhaps photographs of your equipment together with some of those working drawings in ink line, etc. Would it be possible to get those photographs that appeared with Jay Leyda's article in Arts and Architecture? And if you can, we would welcome a plan of the arrangement of such an

exhibition on your work—just how you would want it done, together with the necessary explanatory matter to accompany each diagram or photograph. I hope this isn't asking too much. But the manner in which your work is accomplished is so revolutionary that we feel [that] an explanatory display would be vital.

If this idea goes through we would need the material somewhat before the 27th of September to allow time for organizing and hanging. Let us know how you feel about it.

We will have to get the booklet finished before that date also. Which means that the editorial material will have to be ready for the linotype around the end of August.

That's about all I can think of at the present time. You will hear from us in a week or so, and in the meanwhile, let us hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Maya Deren, 8/10/46

[. . .]

August 10, 1946

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

By now, no doubt, Richard Foster has received both my wire and the letter which follows, and therefore some of your questions, at least, are answered.

The most important question—WHERE IS THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENTAL FILM MOVEMENT?—is one which I wish someone would answer for me. About a year and a half ago, when I first succeeded in building up, to an unexpected and encouraging degree, the distribution of my own films, I would get letters asking for more films of that kind and I immediately set out to try to locate some, thinking to add them to the list which I had, and to thus form the nucleus of a distributing organization devoted to the serious experimental art film. I felt that if people knew that their work would get at least some showing, it would encourage them to try more. Well, unfortunately, I still have not found a single film to add to my distribution list. Man Ray, Bunuel, Leyda and Fischinger are no longer making individual films on a personal scale … that is, out of their own means and unresponsible to any distributor. For reasons which you will learn in my little booklet [*An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*], which will be out in the fall, I am primarily interested in films which use of capacity of film to employ the elements of reality in imagination, rather than abstract films which carry over the principles of plastics artifice into film. The Whitney Brothers do some interesting work, but it is impossible, to date, to reproduce color film reasonably well or cheaply, so it would be out of the question to try to distribute their films on the inexpensive basis which I distribute mine … and into the inexperienced hands into which such small-scale distribution covers. (A scratched black and white film is somehow acceptable—but a color film, with sound, has to be in perfect condition, which means expert handling all along.)

Some films, which I have not myself seen and so cannot vouch for, have come to my attention, and you might investigate them. One is a film by Sara Kathryn Arledge, 184 2 Rose Villa st, Pasadena, California. She has been an art professor at the University of Arizona, and wrote to me of a dance film which she had once started but abandoned at the beginning of the war, and although I urged her to do so, I do not know whether she has finished it. Another is Kenneth Anglemyer [Anger], 2021 Holly Drive, Hollywood 8, California, who has also an uncompleted film which is not yet finally cut and for which he has not the money to put on a soundtrack. It is, incidently, at the moment, 70 mins. long. Both of them have suffered, it seems to me, from making grandiose, Hollywood-sized plans which they now cannot, of course, complete. I can only point out that my four films were made without sound, in terms of silence, for budgets ranging from $150 to $600 (the last). I think that in this whole problem lies some of the basic reason

for the poverty of the experimental film movement. People just will not exert themselves with primitive means and humble requirements (in the technical sense). I know of a whole number of film scripts which only Cecil B. DeMille, with all his means, could produce. I feel that extravagant production is not a requisite of art.

This year the Amateur Cinema League (write to Mr. James Moore, Amateur Cinema League, Graybar Building, Lexington Ave and 44th st., N.Y.) gave first prize to a sort of semi-abstract film which I have not seen. I suspect it is a rather pompous and pretentious effort, but this is based on literary descriptions and may be a great injustice. At any rate, that's one that's finished.

This same Cinema League, about five years ago, gave its first annual award to a film called "Lot in Sodom" which was later blown up to 35 mm (The league is for 16mm) and is now occasionally shown at the Fifth Avenue playhouse here in New York. I have seen it a number of times (not by choice) and, myself, find it in very bad taste—the sort of thing which I think gives a bad name to the experimental movement—but this is a purely personal opinion in which a number of people do not concur, and so I am listing it in any case.

The film which I think is by far one of the very best poetic films that have ever been made is Jean Cocteau's "Blood of a Poet." It is shown here at the Fifth Avenue Playhouse from time to time but I do not know who distributes it. At any event, it is on 35 mm when it is shown there, and I presume you only have 16 mm equipment. I have heard that there is a man who owns a 16 mm copy—Mr. Victor of the Victor Animatograph—but he is very reluctant to lend it out. However, if it is requested by the San Francisco Museum, he may do so and I would a million times encourage you to try. Unfortunately, I am now in North Carolina and my address file is in New York City, so I cannot send you his address but if you are interested, I will do so from New York at the end of the month.

The other positive suggestion which I have (I presume you are yourselves familiar with the Museum of Modern Art Catalogue) are some ancient comedies which Joseph Cornell has collected and which are infinitely more cinematic and amusing than the recent comedies. His address, also, I would have to send from New York.

I'm terribly sorry to be so discouraging. I feel very discouraged myself. Having built up quite a respectable nucleus for a unique distributing organization, I was sure that many fine little films would come out of hiding, once they knew there was a chance of being shown. Nothing like this has taken place although I've asked everywhere. Please let me know if you should stumble on anything.

Incidently, are you using just American, recent work or will you use other things also?

The film which you ask about—my last film [*Ritual in Transfigured Time*]—has been completed since the middle of June and so is available either for the beginning of November or for the date with Mr. Foster mentioned—Nov. 13.

I am very curious as to what source on the West Coast is responsible for it's being known as the "Anais Nin" film. Anais Nin is a personal friend of mine, and since I never hire professional people, I always use friends to perform in my films (as I did for the banquet scene in <u>At Land</u>, and for the other scenes in it,) where various friends of mine appear. In this recent film I asked Anais to perform in a certain small capacity in my film and, as she seemed very good at it, I enlarged that part somewhat. The two main roles—which are by far larger and more important—are played by two other people. Her role is so small that she is not even credited on the titles since to credit her would have meant to credit also about four or five other people and my films are not built on performers or performances. This small role is Miss Nin's sole connection with the film and it is consequently surprising to me to find the West Coast referring to it as the Anais Nin film. I hope, that if you have the opportunity to do so, you will straighten this out where you can.

My very best wishes for your film program, and I expect to hear from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Maya Deren *[hw]*

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[The film by Sara Kathryn Arledge, mentioned in paragraph 3, is Introspection, *which was begun in 1941 and finished in 1946.]*

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Letter to Arthur Rosenheimer Jr. from Frank Stauffacher, 8/20/46

20 Aug 1946

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Rosenheimer,

I am working with Mr. Foster in arranging this film program, and so this letter comes from him also. First we wish to express our thanks to you for following through so well on our arrangement. When we did not hear from you for several weeks we began to feel a bit frantic, being convinced that we should have left the bookings as you had originally scheduled them. In fact it got so desperate that we put in a phone call to you Saturday morning, just a few moments before we received word of your telegram. Your subsequent letter was received by us with intense relief and joy.

We have already written to Man Ray regarding his 16mm prints. We hope he will let us use them. THE SKELETON DANCE is available at Brandon, and we think we shall add it to the animation program. We were surprised to see, as we mentioned in the wire, that you list UBERFALL, SEASHELL AND THE CLERGYMAN, and SYMPHONIE DIAGONALE as available from you, since we did not see them on your list before. We have sent out quite a bit of correspondence searching for these very three films. If we can book SANG DU POETE on the 22 of Nov. from Martin Lewis, we shall install a 35mm projector for this one night because we feel this one should be included in the series. However there is the possibility Lewis will not rent it to us for a non-profit Museum showing. We have yet to check on this. Therefore we will keep MILLION DOLLAR LEGS and the Sennett booked for that date in case, and you can send them to us anyway—or at least we can let that stand for the time being. Important: We definitely would like to have CHIEN ANDALOU on the 29th of Nov. plus the Duchamp. The Richter film is too unconfirmed. We have received no replies to our several letters, as yet. Should we also write to the Ballard place [the Ballard Film Society in Hollywood], then? We don't have much faith in films arriving from Los Angeles on a definite date. Maya Deren's films were supposed to arrive here from the preceding renter who happened to be located in Los Angeles—they were scheduled for a certain date; they arrived a week later. So perhaps it would be well, when the time comes, for us to write the Ballard place also.

We wrote to Douglas Crockwell several weeks ago, but it was addressed c/o Art Center in the Graybar Building, his representatives for his commercial art work. But we have not heard from him, and so we will write again using the address you gave us. And we will also write Miss Butte as you suggested.

THE SEASHELL AND THE CLERGYMAN got mixed up in the precursors by mistake. Your arrangement for it now is very good, in fact your entire schedule is perfect and with the exception of our SANG DU POETE problem all that is left for us to do is fill the weak spots. For the evening of Nov. 1 we shall have Maya Deren's RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME together with the Whitney brothers work, and this should make a complete program. I will send you a copy of the complete listing as soon as it is typed up, but I want this letter to get off to you immediately.

As to the stills—we could use anything appropriate and the charge of 30¢ each is OK. These should arrive not later than the 15th of Sept. in order for us to arrange an interesting setup. Could you send them to us by then … ?

We are getting RHYTHM IN LIGHT from Brandon, and we intend to run it on the Fischinger program, Oct. 18. You say you are not familiar with it. None of us have ever seen it, but we have heard reference to it several times, and we understand it was done by Mary Ellen Butte. Your suggestions on the Fantasy into Documentary program are very good. We will give up the idea of trying to get any Norman MacClaren's and we just can't seem to get in touch with Len Lye at all. We thought to include the CRAZY RAY in the fantastic and macabre night on your own suggestion in your letter of 23 July, but as you say, it would make the program too long with USHER. However there should be something

else on this program if we are unsuccessful in getting Man Ray's 16mm prints, since you suggested our running MYSTERES DU CHATEAU DU DE with USHER. There is a possibility he may not send them.

Again we wish to thank you for cooperating so decently with us. We will speak of the practical considerations in the next letter. Inasmuch as both Foster and I were surprised to see those three films mentioned at the beginning of the letter, we want this to get to you so that we can be informed in case we misunderstood, although it seems quite plain that you have them for us. Again we send you our thanks.

Sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Maya Deren from Frank Stauffacher, 8/20/46

20 Aug 1946

[. . .]

Dear Maya Deren,

I am writing this also for Dick Foster. So first I will confirm the dates regarding your own film [*Ritual in Transfigured Time*]. We have it planned for NOV. 1, and it is the main thing on our CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS IN AMERICA. In other words we have arranged the series just as logical as we possibly could, and have given a title to each night in the series. Due to the scarcity of this type of work we have made a very broad selection, from the very earliest to the present day, and we have work from Europe as well. Indeed it would have been impossible to arrange ten nights without digging into the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, and selecting many items that are old, and perhaps familiar to many people—for example, THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. Nevertheless we have endeavored to keep the list consistent in the sense that all of the films were made with the idea of artistic integrity foremost in mind.

We hope that after this series is over, and if it is a success (by this I mean, of course—if there has been a large body of interest) that we can plan for another series to run early next year; by that time we are in hopes we may have definitely located more contemporary work, that we have investigated all of these many leads and addresses, and have formed a fairly solid idea of what's what. Our idea, in all of this, is to build up a realization of the cinema as a serious art form.

I will enclose a rough draft outlining the series so that you can get an idea of our final list. We have changed and rearranged it so often that I hesitate saying it is final, but since the core of the entire series was dependant upon when we could get the Museum of Modern Art Film Library's selections, this is, at last, the best we can do. You will notice SANG DU POETE. For this we intend installing a 35mm projector. It entails having someone from the fire department present during the showing, but we feel this film is important enough for the extra trouble. However it is yet unconfirmed. We understand that Martin Lewis rents it only for commercial showing, and we have not heard from him yet. Some of the program is still very vague, as you can see.

As to the origin of the Anais Nin idea in connection with RITUAL, I don't know where it came from. I first heard it from Foster, and I think he probably heard it from someone in Hollywood, perhaps Clara Grossman. Incidentally, Henry Miller was guest of my brother and I over last week end, and he too thought you were making a Anais Nin film—an idea now strengthened by the appearance of the still in the new Harper's Bazaar.

The section from your little booklet would be fine for inclusion in our own pamphlet. I think the specific notes on RITUAL we could use in our program notes. At the present time this little pamphlet of ours is also rather vague. It is going to contain a general introduction to the subject together with articles by Man Ray, Fischinger, Henry Miller, Whitneys, and your own article. Bunuel had promised us one but I'm afraid he is too busy to write it; however, he may come through. After these essays

will be the program notes followed by a short bibliography. We would like to get all of this material together by the end of the month, in time for typesetting.

We are also planning a show of stills to run along with the series. This should stimulate an added degree of interest. The Museum of Modern Art Film Library will let us have all the appropriate stills from their files, Fischinger and the Whitneys have very interesting material of this sort, and I think it will be a good thing. So we will welcome any of yours you could send. Since the series starts the 27th of Sept. we would like these at least a week or ten days before.

Yes, I saw LOT IN SODOM at the Fifth Ave. Playhouse some years ago and I agree with you. I understand Weber and Watson also made a version of FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, but it has apparently disappeared because I have never heard reference to it since. Thank you very much for the addresses. We will follow them up. If Martin Lewis does not want to rent us SANG DU POETE for museum showing we will try Mr. Victor at your suggestion. I also wanted to ask you if you had any information on the by now famous Hans Richter film-in-progress [*Dreams That Money Can Buy*]. We have written him several times but as yet, no answer. I am in receipt of a letter from Lewis Jacobs in which he gives an address you may know about, or if not, may be interested in: Herman Weinberg, 1600 Broadway, N.Y.C. I see this is Brandon Films address. But Lewis Jacobs implied that Weinberg has experimental films not generally listed in the Brandon catalogue. We have not inquired yet. I have been corresponding with an old friend of mine in Hollywood—John Hubley, at United Productions of America, 1558 N. Vine Street, and he seems to have lines on quite a few experimental films—although he is primarily interested in non-objective, animated films. He has done some interesting ones himself and we are going to include them on our ANIMATED FILM AS AN ART FORM program. You might write to him if you are interested, although I know that you are more interested yourself in imaginative reality. And this is the type of thing so difficult to find. We had to laugh in reading your letter regarding the pompous and grandiose scenarios you have become aware of. We found the same thing in Hollywood. If one wants to do a serious experimental film, it would seem that Hollywood is not the place—indeed the last place, in which to do it.

We are sincerely grateful to you for your help, and for your prompt correspondence. It is indeed appreciated. We will send you any other information we can find.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Luis Buñuel from Frank Stauffacher, 8/22/46

22 Aug 1946

Luis Bunuel
5642 Fountain Ave.
Hollywood, Calif.

Dear Luis Bunuel,

We have been having such a troublesome time getting the film program arranged that we temporarily forgot about the pamphlet. But we have finally gathered together enough films for a good comprehensive ten week program. Last weekend we suddenly realized how little time we had left for the pamphlet. And that was the reason for the phone call to you.

CHIEN ANDALOU is scheduled for the 29th of Nov., the last night in the series. We wanted to show LAND WITHOUT BREAD but it isn't available on 16mm. We have written to the Cine Club de Paris regarding L'AGE D'OR but that is a pretty far fetched request and we are not very hopeful of results. Incidentally Henry Miller has been here for the past few weeks and is writing an article for the pamphlet, and he hopes to be able to return from Big Sur in Oct. or Nov. to see part of the series, at least. He wants us to send you his best regards. At dinner one night he again recounted his seeing

L'AGE D'OR and, since he can be extremely eloquent, it was a great experience just listening to this description. We told him of our very good visit with you some weeks ago.

As to your own essay, we would certainly appreciate including it in this pamphlet—if you can possibly find time for it. I think this pamphlet will go over and may run into a second edition. If this does happen we intend augmenting it and making it into a regular little book on the experimental cinema—a subject about which there is hardly anything published in book form. If the book does go over we will arrange for everyone who has contributed, of course, to get a rake-off on the sales. The first edition will be only a cheap paper bound pamphlet containing program notes and these essays which will be there for the purpose of acquainting the unconditioned spectator to this type of cinema, and it will sell for less than a dollar, just enough to pay for its expenses. After this we can add other material to it and put it out in more endurable form and sell it for more money. When it shows a profit we will divide this profit among the contributors.

Inasmuch as we shall be showing CHIEN ANDALOU we will need some kind of analysis of it. There are plenty of analyses available for reprinting but they are all personal and they are all different, and according to your own word, they are all not correct. Such being the case we feel wrong in reprinting a false interpretation of this film. A few paragraphs from you would be worth more than ten pages of pretentious analysis. And it would be OK in Spanish. If you could possibly do this we would be extremely grateful …

Anyhow, we wish to thank you for the exceptionally interesting evening with you, and the information which you gave us. This acknowledgment is pretty tardy, I know, but trying to get together enough decent film for a ten week program has been more difficult than any of us expected.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Douglass Crockwell, 8/24/46

Douglas Crockwell
Post Office Box 221
Glens Falls New York

August 24, 1946.

Mr. Frank Stauffacher,
San Francisco Museum of Art,
San Francisco, California.

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

Please forgive my delay in answering your letter of July 29th. I have just built a new studio and in moving over the past three or four weeks quite a few letters have been mislaid.

Of course, I am tremendously pleased that you are interested in knowing more about my animations.

About eight years ago I set up an animation easel with the camera mounted overhead and the work area arranged much as a draughtsman's desk except that the working area consisted of several moveable layers of glass slightly separated. The basic idea was to paint continuing pictures on these various layers with plastic paint, adding at times and removing at times and to a certain extent these early attempts were successful. This basic process was changed from time to time with varying results and I have still made no attempt yet to stabilize the method. Somewhat as a consequence of this has been the fragmentary character of the work produced. At all times, however, the work has been tremendously interesting to me, so much so that I have hardly been able to wait to see what is around the corner.

More recently I have been working on other techniques entirely different from the aforementioned, which show a possibility that perhaps some day animations can be greatly quickened and made

more fluid. This new process is very inexpensive, requires little equipment and more widespread attention on the part of the artists may be indicated.

The Museum of Modern Art has some of my films. If these are not included in the group the Museum sends to you I think some arrangements could be made to make up a reel for you here.

I shall be very interested to hear of the success of your project.

Sincerely,

Douglass Crockwell *[hw]*

DC:ddb

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Letter to Jay Leyda from Frank Stauffacher, 8/25/46

25 Aug 1946

Dear Jay Leyda,

Thank you very much for the tip on CHANTS POPULAIRE. I understand it is available from the ITT in Berkeley, although we have not contacted them yet.

We have built the series around the plan you suggested; it is just about the way you had it with the exception of one or two changes—for example, some of the precursors were not available—they were booked elsewhere. And if Martin Lewis will rent us LE SANG D'UN POETE we will install a 35mm projector for this one film. Man Ray's films are no longer available on 16mm from the M. of M.A. [Museum of Modern Art, New York] Film Library and we have written to him but no answer yet. Nor have we received a reply from Douglas Crockwell. [Crockwell's 8/24/46 letter had not yet been received.] And we just can't seem to get an answer from Len Lye … nor Hans Richter. We were happy to learn that the M. of M.A. Film Library has UBERFALL, THE SEASHELL AND THE CLERGYMAN, and SYMPHONIE DIAGONALE, three films we could not find on any lists. All in all, however, the program has shaped up quite well so far. We will send you a copy of the list as soon as they come from the printers.

The pamphlet, too, is shaping up. Today, received an article from Luis Bunuel on CHIEN ANDALOU, and a very wonderful essay on the cinema in general from Henry Miller. We are supposed to get one from Fischinger this week, and from the Whitneys, too. There will also be the Man Ray article, and something from Maya Deren. It seems like quite a conglomeration, but as a unit I think it will be an interesting little booklet.

We owe the whole shape of this program to you, and it is regretted by us that we have not written to you sooner than this to thank you. But trying to dig up these films has been a far more complicated task than we first supposed. And along the way we have collected dozens of other sources that we hope to contact for a second, more interesting series (perhaps) sometime early next year.

Again, many thanks for your help in arranging our series.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Douglass Crockwell, 8/31/46

[. . .]

August 31, 1946.

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

Your program sounds very exciting and I shall be only too happy to send you a copy of my film for your November 1st program.

As this will be somewhat a compositive of various movements I shall have to make up some new title. Probably this length of film could be called "Glens Falls Sequence" in lieu of any better name at the present time. If you care to publicize it in this way probably we could tie it in with any other title I may think up between now and the time I send the film to you.

The copy I will send you will be 16 mm. color silent and should be projected at 16 frames per second and will run about ten minutes.

Could you give me more information about these other men you mentioned in your letter—the Whitney Brothers and Deren,—where they live, their background, etc.?

Sincerely yours,

Douglass Crockwell *[hw]*

DC:ddb

Reprinted by permission of Johanna Crockwell.

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Letter to Peggy Guggenheim from Grace L. McCann Morley, 8/31/46

August 31, 1946

Miss Peggy Guggenheim
Art of this Century
30 West 57th Street
New York, N. Y.

Dear Miss Guggenheim:

By this time I imagine you have returned, or soon are to return from France. I wish I could see you to hear how it all was. We get news of French friends or relatives of friends who keep turning up, but I find I never hear enough or quite what I should like to know.

This has been a busy summer for us—and the coming season promises to be busier still. It all seems to be in the right direction, but a bit hard on us who have lived through the struggle of the past few years, are tired, have no time for any kind of holiday or rest, and must now gird ourselves for what is coming. One does not dare let the moment go by, for if we do not profit from this interval of comparative prosperity, of released energies (from war work, etc.), and get going well and solidly for the peace time work we must do, we shall not have such a chance again perhaps. So we keep on.

Now for business. We do accept with great pleasure your gift of the Rothko. I like it immensely and it wears well. It is in scale with our big galleries and we can use it to advantage. I wrote him and he is pleased he tells me. Many, many thanks. I like much some of the other oils too, and I do like the watercolors, also. I wish I could arrange to buy one for us. I may yet do it. It takes time and sometimes one does not manage the first time—but does in the end. We shall see. A selection from the group has been invited to Santa Barbara. Perhaps Wright Ludington will get one for the Museum and for himself.

Did I tell you how happy I was over Mr. Crocker's purchases for us and for himself. We have been profiting from both. He enjoyed his visit with you.

Next, by the enclosures you will see that we are planning to do something with creative films. It needs doing and I think we have a chance of making it a good job. We mean to spare no pains, and if it goes at all well it is only the first of a series of such programs, presented at intervals. We hope that they will not only be a focus for an enlightened public interest in the creative film, but possibly a little incentive to those who have worked, are working or would like to work in that field. From all accounts recognition and encouragement are needed. Needless to say with our small staff, not very experienced, we could not have managed, though I have long insisted we could. But a few young men enthusiasts in the field volunteered to do the work and research if we could help with the machinery. So it is that Richard Foster who has previously written to you has turned his knowledge and energy to our account in this project. You see that a Hans Richter program has been scheduled for November 29, and I understand that Mr. Richter himself is interested, but there is need of your help to get use of his latest film [*Dreams That Money Can Buy,* 1947] and his collection of films. Could you help us? I have an idea that this is the sort of thing you would consider worth while. I only wish you could be here instead of so far from us for this as well as for other reasons.

Now in connexion with the program we are planning an exhibition. We should have a good Dali and a couple of examples of Marcel Duchamp that tie in with the art background of the program. Could you spare a Dali of yours and how about Duchamp whose work you know so much better than I. Are there any pertinent examples in the "Valise" and could one borrow. Needless to say in the case you could help us we should get Budworth to pack and we should insure and take care of all expense. Could you let me know. Perhaps you have some suggestions. I should much like them.

Meanwhile the Hans Richter films are much on our minds and we do need your help and good will there. I gather he quite properly wants to be sure you approve of our project.

My best wishes to you.

Cordially,

Grace L. McCann Morley
Director

GMM:hc

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Man Ray from Frank Stauffacher, 9/5/46

5 Sept. 1946

Man Ray
1245 Vine Street
Hollywood, Calif.

Dear Man Ray,

We were very glad to get your letter. I am enclosing a copy of the prospectus on the film series. As it had to be thrown together in a hurry for our Sept. mailing, there are many inaccuracies, and there will be some omissions and additions. The titling before each program is likewise quite inaccurate as you can see, but it was the best we could do under the circumstances. Originally we planned for a full evening of your own work, calling it THE WORK OF MAN RAY, or something on that order, but when we discovered there was not enough available to make up a full evening, and when Rosenheimer at the Museum of Modern Art Film Library said he did not have 16mm prints of your work, we had to arrange it differently. It was his idea to put the CHATEAU DU DE with FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, but I see you do not have that yourself for circulation. As it stands now, the place for EMAK BAKIA and L'ETOILE DE MER would be Oct 11. And would $40.00 rental be agreeable with you? That is, for the two films for this one date? We would pay freight charges, etc. of course. The series is arranged on a non-profit basis, but we have good hopes for the catalogue which has now grown in size, and actually will contain articles by Bunuel, Fischinger, Whitneys, Erich Pommer, etc., and the one you so kindly let us use. If the catalogue goes over big, and we realize a profit, it will be divided among the contributors.

Jay Leyda was here last week for a day, and he again helped us with the programming. We are trying to gather adequate program notes. He suggested we ask you for sources of your own work.

Thank you again for your kind help, and for originally getting us started on the right track by giving us Leyda's address and phoning Luis Bunuel for us. And let us know if the price sounds right to you, or if not, what it would be.

Sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Hans Richter, 9/6/46 *[hw]*

Sept 6. 46

Dear Frank Stauffacher;

I got your letter from Aug 26 on Aug 30. To day Sept 5 I got your printed program. I am certainly very much interested indeed in your work regarding the experimental film in as much that I followed this line my whole life and initiated it (together with my friend Eggeling). But I don't understand the purpose of your letter!? I mean what do you actually want? You have your program printed and that's that.—It's unfortunate that you did not contact me earlier because I have put together what I wrote to Mr. Foster: a complete anthology of the Experimental film from 1921–1946: fragments of the work of the exp. (Avantgarde-films) and except Cavalcanti, all the important creators. I have also 3 of my Avantgarde films here: Ghosts, Filmstudy (with scene of D. Milhaud) & Everything Turns [*Ghosts Before Breakfast* (*Vormittagspuk* in German), 1927; *Film Study*, 1926; *Everything Turns, Everything Revolves* (*Alles Drecht Sich, Alles Bewegt Sich* in German), 1929]. I would like to help you—but I don't see how.—I could send you a short article if you have your pamphlet not yet printed!? It probably would be good to tell somebody about the history of the Av.g. movement.—I send you here for your information a pamphlet which I wrote 3 years ago (after I found out at the Mus. of mod. Art that there was a complete mix up about the facts & dates.—

I can't say that I am very delighted that you show my Rhythm 21! It was not meant at that time for distribution. Its naivety and primitivity make it very obnoxious against the technical perfect films of 10 or 20 years later. Besides that it is a kind of a [indecipherable]. I am afraid you make—showing nothing but this film of my work—a kind of anti-propaganda—with all best intentions.

Regarding my picture in production [*Dreams...*]: I am not the owner of the film and it would not be possible to show any part of it before the film has come out through distribution channels.

Now that is as far as the answer to your letter goes.

If there is still a chance to do something reasonable for you let me know. I told you how everything I have in my icebox. Be assured that I am with you because what you do now I did all my life.

Very cordially
Yours

Hans Richter

PS Do you know when Mr. Foster wants my article for "Circle"?

There is one contribution which might add to your show and demonstrate better than anything else the sources from which the Avantgarde film derived: Eggeling's & my scroll-drawings. I could send

you one of both (if I don't need them for my one-man show of paintings which opens Okt 1 at Peggy Guggenheims gallery here). Eggeling and I were painting and drawing variations of abstract themes in counterpoint in the years before 1919 and (annoyed about having our little sheets of paper, one besides the other, lying on the floor in a kind of melodious continuity)—we decided to make them on long scrolls—we were surprised about the real movement they "made" and decided to make them in film. Which we did. And that was the birthdate of the Avantgarde movement—I still have some of these historical scrolls here and I would let you have one or two if properly insured.

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Letter to Hans Richter from Frank Stauffacher, 9/9/46

9 Sept. 1946

Hans Richter
134 East 60th Street
New York 22, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Richter,

Thank you very much indeed for your very comprehensive reply to my letter. The manuscript on the AVANTGARDE that you enclosed is exactly the information we have so long been trying to gather on this movement, without—up till now—much success. Our pamphlet has not yet gone to press, and we will include it just as it stands—if that meets your approval. We would like to use excerpts also for our program notes—for example, the section on Fernand Leger—and credit will be given at all times, of course.

The reason for our including RHYTHMUS 21 is that it was the only thing available of your work. Foster had not received your reply to his letter—he misplaced a lot of his mail in the process of moving from Berkeley to San Francisco, and no doubt your reply was among those lost. This meant that we did not hear from you, and so went ahead selecting what was suitable from The Museum of Modern Art Film Library and elsewhere. However, you mention having available, besides the ANTHOLOGY, three other films: GHOSTS, (I am not sure of these, I may be reading them incorrectly) the one with the Darius Milhaud score, and the other one. (Incidentally, Milhaud and his son have already subscribed to our series!) As you can see by our program, there are still places in it that are not going to make up a full evening. We could add anything available that is not of feature length to the evening of Oct. 25. And our weakest program is Nov. 29, because CHIEN ANDALOU is only two reels, and the Duchamp is very short. Could we place one or more of your above-mentioned films on either of these nights?

We plan to make this entire series the first of an indefinite number of future similar series at the museum. We would like to build up a consistent audience for this type of work, and provide an outlet for contemporary experiments as well as older works. This first series has, of necessity, been arranged without very accurate scholarship, as you can see. But we hope to become more comprehensive. Thus, your ANTHOLOGY would be perfect for our second series which we hope to have ready sometime early next spring.

Your description of Eggeling's and your scroll drawings are also exactly what we would like to incorporate in a gallery exhibition of stills, paintings, diagrams, etc. pertaining to the avantgarde film that we hope will run concurrently with the film series. If you have any of these that will not be used in the Peggy Guggenheim exhibition, we would like to include them, and would have them properly insured, etc. as you requested. But we would like to have this display ready for the first of Oct., if we go ahead with it.

san francisco museum of art

art in cinema Series One

A series of avant-garde films in modern art forms—surrealist, non-objective, abstract, fantastic—are to be shown at the San Francisco Museum of Art in a ten week showing. The schedule is September 27 through November 29, 1946, Friday evenings at 8:00 P.M. This series is being jointly sponsored by the Museum, the California School of Fine Arts, and Circle Magazine.

It is the first attempt of its kind in San Francisco. The series will include many films that have had a very limited public showing in America. Each film has been chosen for its artistic merit, with emphasis on films made in the modern art tradition. The Museum believes that the film as an art form has not been fully explored in America. As a part of the Museum's over-all policy of bringing to San Francisco the best representative works of contemporary artists in all art mediums, this series has been arranged.

The program as it was originally conceived had no principle of organization. The field of the so-called art film was an unknown quantity; none of the normal distribution channels for commercial films were of any help in arranging the series. The New York Museum of Modern Art Film Library was the best source for the films, and we have leaned heavily upon them for help. Without the patient understanding of Mr. Arthur Rosenheimer, Assistant Curator of the Film Library, this series would not have been possible. The method of organizing the series has been a highly personal one, involving interviews with some of the artists who made the films, discussions with the few people who had knowledge of the field, and extensive research in widely scattered magazine articles, books, and catalogues. The program as it now stands, attempts to cover the field in a comprehensive way. Jay Leyda, an authority on this subject, assisted immeasurably in the arrangement of the program.

The catalogue will include articles by Luis Bunuel, Henry Miller, Oskar Fischinger, John and James Whitney, Maya Deren, and Man Ray. A short bibliography will be included.

We hope that this series will accomplish several purposes: that it will show the relation between the film and the other art media—sculpture, painting, poetry; that it will stimulate interest in the film as a creative art medium in itself, requiring more of an effort of participation on the part of the audience than the Hollywood fantasies, before which an audience sits passively and uncreatively; and that it will give assistance to those contemporary artists who labor in obscurity in America with no distribution channels for their work.

The series is organized on a non-commercial, non-profit basis, and single tickets will not be sold. Admission is by series subscription. Inquiries should be directed to Mrs. Noble Hamilton of the Museum. Series tickets are $6.00 (including tax) for the public, and $5.00 for Museum Members, for the entire series of ten nights; and $3.00 (including tax) for the public, $2.50 for Museum Members for a series of any five nights.

Because seating is limited, subscriptions will be taken in order of receipt and season tickets will be given preference and will be reserved. (Season tickets for the series of ten.)

program

Sept. 27	**Precursors to the Avant-garde Film.** Includes some very early Skladanowsky primitives (1896), a sequence from THE GOLEM, and Robert Wiene's THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI.
Oct. 4	**The French Avant-garde.** Includes BALLET MECANIQUE by Fernand Leger, ENTR'ACTE by Rene Clair, SMILING MADAME BEUDET by Germaine Dulac, and MENILMONTANTE by Dmitri Kirsanov.
Oct. 11	**Continental Avant-garde.** Includes the famous EMAK BAKIA by Man Ray, UBERFALL by Erno Metzner, and COQUILLE ET CLERGYMAN (THE SEA SHELL AND THE CLERGYMAN) by Germaine Dulac.
Oct. 18	**Non-objective Form Synchronized with Music.** The complete available works of Oskar Fischinger, and RHYTHM IN LIGHT by Mary Ellen Butte.
Oct. 25	**The Animated Film as an Art Form.** Includes early work of Viking Eggeling and Walt Disney, together with some unusual contemporary developments, with Hans Richter's RHYTHMUS 21.
Nov. 1	**Contemporary Experimental Films in America.** Includes Maya Deren's latest film, RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME, the complete works of John and James Whitney and others.
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Nov. 29	**The Surrealists.** Includes the most famous of surrealist films: UN CHIEN ANDALOU by Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, together with Marcel Duchamp's ANAEMIC CINEMA, and Hans Richter's latest film (tentative).

NOTE: (Program subject to change without notice.)

Illustration 6. Program announcement for Art in Cinema's first series, fall 1946. An order blank followed the text.

There is just one question in my mind pertaining to the article you sent us, and that is, if it was originally written for the Museum of Modern Art, we would want to be sure of not getting into trouble with them by our reprinting it, in the event that they have it copyrighted, or have any other claim on it. However, it [is] so exactly what we need that we are in hopes there will be no cause for trouble.

We are greatly indebted to you for your interest and for the material you have sent us. Again, thank you very much. We will keep you posted on any new developments, and we hope it possible to make arrangements with you for showing the ANTHOLOGY on the second series.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

PS: Foster says that George Leite of Circle magazine would like to have the article in question at any time. Circle 9 is now being printed and will be out next week. Circle 10 will be ready at an unknown date, so there is no definite deadline.

In regard to the three films mentioned above, as I say, we could use them either on Oct. 25, or Nov. 29, although they could be used on any of the nights. If this is agreeable with you, let us know the conditions of rental, prices, etc.

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Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's First Series, 9/46

ART IN CINEMA Series One

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Illustration 7. Berlin intersection in Walther Ruttmann's *Berlin: Die Sinfonie einer Grosstadt* (Berlin: Symphony of a Big City, 1927). Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive.

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NOTE: (Program subject to change without notice.)

[The announcement ended with an order blank.]

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Letter to James and John Whitney from Frank Stauffacher, 9/22/46

22 Sept. 1946

Dear John & Jim

The photographs arrived yesterday and they are superb for the exhibit. We hope to get this up in another week. The booklet is way behind schedule because we keep getting more material for it, and this makes us more selective. For example, Hans Richter sent us a definitive and detailed history of the avant-garde film that he wrote a few years ago, and which has not so far been published. The thing is getting larger, and will now cost much more than we originally intended—to print it. But we have hopes for this booklet, and will finance it somehow.

The press preview went off okay, and we had a good attendance from them. I ran the projector because the regular projectionist was off that morning, and so I didn't get a chance to sense the reactions while the films were on. But afterwards, in general, the comments were very good, although mixed. We ran a few of Fischinger's, yours, and two of Maya Deren's. These were the only ones we could obtain on short notice for this event. One thing was obvious: the press was divided into the old reactionary and progressive sides. Critics, like Alfred Frankenstein, who like classics, felt your films were <u>too</u> modern, although they liked them as experiments—this was Frankenstein's comment afterwards. On the other hand, the younger, more forward-looking were terrifically enthusiastic, re your films. I am eager to get reactions from the big regular audience when we show them in the series. Already the tickets have practically sold out, and a week to go yet.

Foster gave a short talk to the press prior to the screening, and he read excerpts from your paper on how the films were created technically. The gallery exhibit, when it gets up, will complete the picture, as far as explanation is concerned. Dr. Morley, the curator here, and the entire museum staff went completely overboard on your films, and wanted to see them a second time. I am enclosing one result of this press preview. Kevin Wallace is neither an art critic nor a music critic, so his remarks don't hold much water from the aesthetic point of view. Frankenstein and the rest have not reported in the papers yet, due no doubt to the current dither about the opera opening. But all in all, the films have created considerable dither themselves.

I'll send you along other press pieces as they come out. Foster is making up contracts of sorts, to send those of you who are renting us films—at least, that's what he says, and so you'll hear from him within a week. Again, thanks for cooperating with us so smoothly, and best wishes to you both.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James Broughton, 9/24/46 *[hw]*

378 Golden Gate Ave
San Francisco, 2
Sept 24, 1946

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

Mr. Peterson [Sidney Peterson] has expressed some belated concern that the program note which I wrote about "The Potted Psalm" might be misconstrued as too fulsome a tribute to his key role in the film's making. Therefore he has asked me to urge you to edit it, if you & Mr. Foster should likewise consider it too much of a 'blurb,' or the kind of material unsuitable to your catalogue. If you wish to leave it out entirely, and allow Mr. Peterson's statement alone to express the film, that is also satisfactory. We were not too certain of what you desired in your Program Notes, and since I asked Mr. Peterson to prepare the Statement, I felt impelled to make some comment of my own which would suitably credit his creative responsibility in the project. I should like this fact to be known, but as for the final wording of it (or even its advisability), that I will leave to your discretion as editor.

Yours very sincerely,

James Broughton

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Letter to Mrs. Noble Hamilton from Edward J. Soph, 9/26/46

U.S. NAVY RECRUITING STATION
Post Office Building
Third and Boulder Streets
Tulsa 2, Oklahoma

26 September 1946

Mrs Noble Hamilton
San Francisco Museum of Art,
Civic Center, San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Mrs. Hamilton:

I have received the announcement of "Art in Cinema, Series One." Thank you very much.

I am most interested in the program the Museum is offering and regret that I shall not be in San Francisco this season.

During the past few months a few friends and I have attempted to organize such a program for the Philbrook Museum of Fine Arts in this city. We have not had the same success that you seem to be enjoying. We shall show only one film which might be called "avant-garde"—"The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari." Unfortunately the patrons of the local museum are not in the least objective in viewpoint and it is going to take a great amount of education to change them. They doubtlessly will be outraged when they see "Alexander Nevesky." It is our plan to run a yearly program and we hope in time to be able to show films of the more "advanced" sort.

May I ask a favour of you? As I am intensely interested in the type of program you are offering I would like very much to have a copy of the catalogue mentioned in the announcement. Would you please send me one? If there is any charge please let me know and I shall forward the amount required.

Please address all correspondence to:

Lt. Edward J. Soph,
205 East 25th Street,
Tulsa 5, Oklahoma.

I would like to have the catalogue because of my personal interest.

Very truly yours,

Edward J. Soph *[hw]*
Edward J. Soph,
Lieutenant, USNR.

[Mrs. Noble Hamilton was membership secretary for the San Francisco Museum of Art during the 1940s.]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James Broughton, 9/26/46

[. . .]

26 September 1946

Dear Frank Stauffacher:

In the light of a few days of leisure, following our absorbed haste in preparing the Statement for your catalogue, Mr. Peterson and I have subsequently concluded that it would be a most unfair as well as unwise record of the complexity of our collaboration for my Program Note to be published. Therefore, we ask you now imperatively not to print it at all. It represents too one-sided a tribute, leaving out of account the equally substantial nature of my contributions—as playwright, poet, and theatre-director—to the making of the film.

Collaboration, as you may not know, is an exceedingly complicated affair; it is often difficult to determine who was responsible for what, and how. In this particular case, our wiser reflection has made us realize that we are both thoroughly responsible for the result. (If you have read Dali's autobiography, you will know that he considers his part far superior to Bunuel's; and I daresay the reverse is true.)

I trust that our fluctuations in this matter will not cause undue disruption in your printing procedure, and that you will be able to do us this final favor. If you feel that some Note is required, let it state no more than that it was produced by us jointly here in San Francisco.

You, and Mr. Foster, may be gratified to learn that we have been also hard at work making many improvements in the film, which should do much toward its shape and experience as a work of art.

I trust this letter reaches you in time. I have been unable to reach you by phone, and have therefore taken this slower expediency.

Yours, very cordially,

James Broughton *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Joel Singer.

[Of course, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali collaborated on Un Chien Andalou *(1929) and* L'Ag d'or *(1930).]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Edward J. Soph from Mrs. Noble Hamilton, 9/28/46

September 28, 1946.

Lieutenant Edward J. Soph,
U.S. Navy Recruiting Station
Post Office Bldg.,
Third & Boulder Sts.,
Tulsa, 2, Oklahoma.

Dear Lieut Soph:

The first ART IN CINEMA Program passed off most successfully last night—I am enclosing the program notes we passed around to the audience. Our attendance was about 500 people and we have been sold out of tickets for the last week. We had a group who neglected to send in for tickets—about 30 odd—whom we finally had to let in for standing room.

The catalogue on this series is still in the process of being completed—we do not know the price it will be as yet—but I shall keep your letter on file and let you know when it is ready for distribution. All the sources for the material used in this program will be in the catalogue, as well as the story of how the program came to be.

All the work was done by a group of young men—Richard Foster, Frank Stauffacher and George Leite—as I am in charge of Motion Picture programs here, my name appears on the prospectus, otherwise, I take no credit. Mr. Foster came to me a year ago with the idea—I had tried unsuccessfully to get such a program together and had failed—so when they agreed to really track the films down, I was overjoyed. The Museum of Modern Art have been of invaluable help in the compilation of both program and catalogue and they are the principal source of films, though there are a number of other sources too—all of which will be in the catalogue.

Thank you so much for your interest.

Most sincerely,

Mrs. Noble Hamilton
In Charge of Film Programs

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Alfred Frankenstein, "Art and Music," from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/6/46

"Art and Music: 'In a Small Way,' the Experimental Films at the Museum Are 'Colossal,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 6, 1946.

One of the differences between a movie and, say, a hot dog is that you can taste a hot dog. You don't taste a movie yet, and God help you if you ever can, but you can still see plenty on a movie screen, including a great deal that you will never be able to see anywhere else.

You can, for instance, witness the meeting of Frederic Chopin and Herbert Hoover at the funeral of William Tell, and experience the heights of pathos and lyricism achieved by that funerary cortege as Rene Clair steps up its tempo from slow motion to the most vertiginous and devastating "chase" in the history of the cinema.

You can see San Francisco transmogrified through the poetic and image-making eyes of Sidney Peterson and James Broughton into a place of such strangeness, wild action and still terror, as exists nowhere except in the dreaming mind of every human being. And you can see the comedy of shapes in movement, flickering in and out of closeness and distance, twirling, dancing and constantly changing as Oskar Fischinger sets forth the fireworks of his abstract films to music.

Maybe Rene Clair didn't mean you to see Chopin, Hoover and William Tell in his picture, and perhaps Mr. Peterson and Mr. Broughton have their own reserved opinion regarding their new film, "The Potted Psalm"; it is a matter of little moment. For one of the delights of experimental art forms

is that each person will "read" them according to his own prejudices and each person will be right. Thus an old principle is reaffirmed in a new setting: release art from the tyranny of "meaning" and you enrich its meanings a thousand fold.

The above sage and beautiful literature is composed by way of informing you that the San Francisco Museum of Art has embarked upon a series of presentations of so-called 'avant garde' films, to run on Friday nights at 8.

The current series is devoted entirely to experimental films. The narrative and dramatic pictures usually exploited in such offerings—"The Birth of a Nation" and that sort of thing—are excluded. The pictures which Richard Foster and Frank Stauffacher have assembled to show at the museum are surrealist, symbolistic, whatnot; they agree only in that their emphasis is upon experiment with the camera rather than upon actors and actresses.

Some of them are lent by the famous film library at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, but in the course of their researches Foster and Stauffacher have run across much that the Museum of Modern Art has not collected. They have found innumerable experimenters with the film in various corners of this country, and they are a highly varied crew. One of them, Douglas Crockwell, is a highly successful commercial artist who has designed covers for the Saturday Evening Post. Others are poets, musicians, dancers, and refugees from UFA genteelly starving to death in Hollywood. There is, in short, a great deal more isolated experiment with movies going on hereabouts than anybody ever realized—and the European field, so far as recent work is concerned, remains to be explored.

Foster and Stauffacher are preparing a catalogue for their series which will be a kind of monograph on films of the avant-garde. It includes a hair-raising document, an article on "The Art of Cineplastics" written in 1919 by none other than Elie Faure. That great historian of art speaks, in part, of "the new plastic impressions I have obtained at the cinema. Their elements, their complexity, which varies and winds in a continuous movement, the constantly unexpected things imposed on the work by its mobile composition, ceaselessly renewed, ceaselessly broken and remade, fading away and reviving and breaking down, monumental for one flashing instant, impressionistic the second following—all this constitutes a phenomenon too radically new for us even to dream of classing it with painting, or with sculpture, or with the dance, least of all with the modern theater. It is an unknown art that is beginning.

"I would point out," Faure continues, "the immense resources which, independent of the acting of the cinemimics, are beginning to be drawn from their multiple and incessantly modified relationships with the surroundings—the landscape; the calm, the fury, and the caprice of the elements—from natural or artificial lighting, from the prodigiously complex and shaded play of values, from precipitate or retarded movements.

"That the starting point of the art of the motion picture is in plastics, seems to me to be beyond all doubt. To whatever form of expression, as yet scarcely suspected, it may lead us, it is by volumes, arabesques, gestures, attitudes, relationships, associations, contrasts and passages of tones—the whole animated and insensibly modified from one fraction of a second to another—and it will impress our sensibility and act on our intelligence by the intermediation of our eyes."

This, mind you, came out a quarter-century ago, when cinematographic experiment was just getting started. The program it sets forth would probably not make much sense to Louis B. Mayer, but then Mr. Mayer does not control everything. Some of the experimenters rounded up by Foster and Stauffacher are doing pretty much what Faure said they would do; others are doing a good deal more.

In 1919 Faure could not foretell Salvador Dali's revolt against the plastic, formalistic, abstract view of art. Luis Bunuel, who worked with Dali on "An Adalusion Dog" 10 years after Faure's article appeared, writes that in making this picture the collaborators discarded any idea or image "if it was derived from remembrance, or from their cultural pattern, or if, simply, it had a conscious association with another earlier idea. They accepted only those representations as valid which, though they moved them profoundly, had no possible explanation."

Faure did not foresee Technicolor or the sound film, and the vast possibilities they open up. To be sure, the experimental films so far produced with these resources are rather rudimentary, especially those that attempt synchronization of sound and sight. Fischinger's abstractions, rigorously tied, point by point and beat by beat, to the music of Bach, Mozart, Brahms and Souza are cute and decorative and amusing, but essentially childish. John and James Whitney reverse the process, creating their sound-tracks by some complex mathematical device whereby the sound is a kind of by-product of the movements and intensities of their visual images. The result is quite horrible to the ear and adds nothing to the effect of the whole; it is simply a mirror-image of Fischinger's fallacy. None of

Illustration 8. Sara Kathryn Arledge, circa 1931. Photograph by Margrethe Mather. Courtesy Terry Cannon.

them will get anywhere until sight and sound move independently, breathe equally, and comment on each other.

Faure's prophecy of films about the "microscopic and telescopic" infinite has not yet been fulfilled, at least in any literal sense; the love-life of the bacillus botulinos has interesting lyrical possibilities awaiting its David Wark Griffith. But what has been created so far is a large body of experimental film which has a curiously epic quality and appeal.

The epic is a medium of adventure. From its beginning it suggests a long unfoldment of curious experiences, strange incidents, and fantastic happenings. Such an unfoldment is provided by the experimental films at the museum, even when they are extremely short. As a famous character far from unknown to the cinema once remarked, "In a small way, it's colossal."

[Since Art in Cinema presented each event only once, there were few reviews of the films chosen by Stauffacher. Alfred Frankenstein's announcement of the series, however, reflected a consciousness of the film series on the part of the San Francisco press. Beginning with the second program of the first series, the San Francisco Chronicle *regularly provided a brief announcement of Art in Cinema's Friday evening presentations the day before, on the page with the time-table for commercial films. For years this was the only regular announcement for noncommercial film presentations in the* Chronicle.*]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Richard Foster from Sara Kathryn Arledge, 10/9/46 *[hw]*

1842 Rose Villa St.
Pasadena, 10, Calif.

Oct. 9, 1946

Mr. Richard B. Foster
c/o San Francisco Museum of Art
Civic Center
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mr. Foster:

Mr. Baxter has forwarded your letter and the announcements of the Art in Cinema series to be shown this fall. Thank you very much. I am sorry to miss this series as I have not had the opportunity to see several of the films included. However, we expect to locate permanently in Berkeley in January so I am looking forward to seeing the spring series.

In regard to my dance film—we produced three minutes (screen time) in 1941 but the many difficulties due to the war and lack of sufficient funds to overcome them made it necessary to suspend production. We were able to start work again this September and expect to finish it by the middle of November. It is to be shown here in Hollywood the 27 of November, and at three other dates yet to be arranged in this area. It will be available for your Spring Series. This would give you an opportunity to see the film at our convenience after we move to Berkeley and to decide whether it would be suitable for that series.

The film—Phantasmagoria—is a related series of experiments presenting some of the manifold possibilities of the motion picture as a medium for the dance. It is on 16mm. kodachrome film and the screen time will probably be around 8 minutes.

Sincerely

Sara Kathryn Arledge

Reprinted by permission of Terry Cannon.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Program Notes for the 10/11/46 Presentation

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA....SERIES ONE

Sponsored by The San Francisco Museum of Art, Circle Magazine, and The California School of Fine Arts.

OCTOBER 11, 1946....CONTINENTAL AVANTGARDE*

EMAK BAKIA	Man Ray
L'ETOILE DE MER	Man Ray
COQUILLE ET CLERGYMAN	Germaine Dulac

Program Notes

Our inclination to expect every film to tell a story stems from our deep-rooted Hollywood heritage. Actually, a film need not tell a story any more so, for example, than does music. If we cannot discern a logical sequence of literary ideas, we should not blame the film. Perhaps none was intended. The fact remains that thousands of movies containing more or less logical ideas have passed beneath the bridge, yet these simple experiments still remain fresh and stimulating. Although there is much in them that might seem trite to our modern eyes, there is also much in them that seems new,—which is another way of defining "Avantgarde."

EMAK BAKIA (French 1926) Produced, directed, and photographed by Man Ray. (Loaned through the courtesy of Man Ray.) "A series of fragments, a cinepoem with a certain optical sequence make up a whole that still remains a fragment. Just as one can much better appreciate the abstract beauty in a fragment of a classic work than in its entirety, so this film tries to indicate the essentials in contemporary cinematography. It is not an 'abstract' film or a story-teller; its reasons for being are its inventions of light-forms and movements, while the more objective parts interrupt the monotony of abstract inventions or serve as punctuation. Anyone who can sit through an hour's projection of a film in which sixty per cent of the action passes in and out of doorways and in inaudible conversations, is asked to give twenty minutes of attention to a more or less logical sequence of ideas without any pretention of revolutionizing the film industry. To those who could still question 'the reason for this extravagance' one can simply reply by translating the title EMAK BAKIA, an old Basque expression which means 'don't bother me.' " (Man Ray, in Close-Up. August 1927)

L'ETOILE DE MER (Star of the Sea) (French 1928) Produced, directed and photographed by Man Ray from a poem of the same name by Robert Desnos. With Andre de la Riviere. (Loaned through the courtesy of Man Ray.) Here the peculiar beauty of a modern poem is translated into visual rhymes and visual rhythms by the use of experimental photographic techniques. The fluid, atmospheric quality is a result of shooting through a pane of obscuring glass, but when an image presents a compositional interest it is shot normally. The oscillation from hazy transfigurations to sharp, clearly-understood objectivity conveys perfectly the atmosphere of the poem which was its inspiration.

COQUILLE ET CLERGYMAN (The Seashell and The Clergyman) (French 1928) Directed by Germaine Dulac from a scenario by Antonin Artaud. Photographed by Paul Guichard. (Loaned by The Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) By the use of fantasy and symbolism, Madame Dulac takes us into the mind of a clergyman whose religious vows deny his normal impulses. His conscious and subconscious thoughts move across the screen with the grace of choreography. Authority, dressed first in a bemedaled uniform and then as a parson, appears and reappears to frustrate the clergyman's desires and to lawfully enjoy for himself that which the clergyman cannot have. Here, conscious symbolism is chosen to evoke definite reactions, to lead the spectator through the clergyman's frustration, resentment, and escape into a dream-fantasy where Authority presides over his marriage to the woman, only to find in the pieces of the shattered crystal, the menacing face of Authority, once again. (For a complete study of the visual symbols in this film, see Oswell Blakeston's Freud On The Films in Close-Up, November, 1929.)

—Frank Stauffacher

Musical accompaniment for this program selected by Paul Velguth and Sydney Rawson.

The next program in this series will be NON-OBJECTIVE FORM SYNCHRONIZED WITH MUSIC

*UBERFALL, originally scheduled here, has been transferred to a later date due to the length of this evening's program.

[These are the first program notes Stauffacher signed.]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Grace L. McCann Morley, 10/22/46

San Francisco Museum of Art
The Museum of the San Francisco Art Association
War Memorial—Civic Center
Hemlock 2040
San Francisco, California

WILLIAM W. CROCKER, President
GRACE L. McCANN MORLEY, Director

October 22, 1946

Mr. Frank Stauffacher
198 Warren Road
San Mateo, California

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

May I resumé for the record our general understanding concerning the catalogue for "Art in Cinema."

We are to copyright the catalogue, so that the rights are to be in the name of the Museum, Art in Cinema Society as it is a non-profit venture and any income over and above the various agreed costs may be credited to the Art in Cinema Fund, to be used in developing further this activity in the future.

It is agreed that if you care to use any of the material included in the catalogue for a book on the cinema in the future that we shall grant you permission without charge, in consideration of your work in preparing the catalogue and obtaining the material in it.

The catalogue is to sell at $2.00 retail at our desk and anywhere else. It will sell at $1.50 to Members of the Art in Cinema Society and to all regular Museum Members. It will sell at $1.20 wholesale. Tax, where it is applicable, will of course be added at the time of sale.

It is suggested that subscription be taken even in advance of publication in order to have some operating funds, and to get more idea of immediate demand. You will arrange with Mrs. Hamilton the free copies which are to go to contributors and others. It is agreed that some appropriate payment, even if only a token payment, be made to the contributors. Such a payment has already been made to Bazalel Schatz ($75) for designing the cover and for laying out the entire catalogue.

It is understood that any return after the costs of printing and of these payments have been met will go into the Art in Cinema Fund to be added to whatever remains from the program itself to swell the Fund for future use in the development of more Art in Cinema programs. No individual will benefit or make any kind of profit on the Catalogue nor on the program.

May I add here what I have so often said, that we are exceedingly grateful for all you have done to make the whole program a possibility and a success.

Sincerely yours,

Grace L. McCann Morley
Director

GMM:nb

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Richard Foster from Margaret Wright and Una Atkinson, 10/24/46 *[hw]*

737 Brussels St
San Francisco 24

24 Oct. 1946.

Dear Mr. Foster,

We hold two tickets for the Friday night film series for which you are the manager.

Our seats are 21 and 22.

Would it be possible for us to have these seats changed for others nearer the screen?

We make this request for two reasons—

1. We had no choice of location when we bought these seats and find ourselves with headaches after each performance.

2. Being on the aisle we were disturbed all through last Friday's performance by the small "safety" light on the baseboard. This was kept lighted for the first time and though shaded was most annoying. We were pretty tired of holding our programs up to faces for two hours.

During all previous programs this light has been OUT and safety be damned!

An obliging young man in the row behind extinguished this light last Friday, whereupon the ticket-taker-cum-usher (she wears a green velvet skirt and yellow blouse and is blond-ish) danced up to him, leaned over him and yearned:

"It's a safety measure…coo…coo…coo…don't you understand? coo…coo…coo"

The young man came up from under and stammered:

"Uh…uh…but that light is bothering those ladies in front."

"Huh!" snapped the usher, putting out the light once more and flouncing off with nary a glance or a coo at us!

This same usher a couple of weeks ago occupied, with a young man, two seats in the row in front of us. The running conversation she kept up with her companion during some of the delightful music annoyed her neighbors so much that she had to be "shushed" over and over again.

It would seem to be a very unhappy choice of ushers.

We understand that safety measures are necessary but why do they have to interfere with one's comfort? Goodness knows that gallery is a bad enough place in which to show motion pictures—lack of adequate ventilation, seats not raked—uncomfortable chairs—without piling on other annoyances!

We hope you will please be able to do something for us.

Yours very truly

(Miss) Margaret Wright
(Miss) Una Atkinson

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Program Notes for the 10/25/46 Presentation

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA....SERIES ONE
Sponsored by the San Francisco Museum of Art, Circle Magazine, and
The California School of Fine Arts.

FIFTH PROGRAM, OCT. 25, 1946....THE ANIMATED FILM AS AN ART FORM

PRIMITIVE ANIMATED PAINTINGS	Unknown
DRAME CHEZ LES FANTOCHES	Emile Cohl
GERTIE THE DINOSAUR	Winsor McCay
NEWMAN'S LAUGH-O-GRAMS	Walt Disney
SKELETON DANCE	Walt Disney
STEAMBOAT WILLIE	Walt Disney
CARMEN	Lotte Reiniger
CHANTS POPULAIRES	Norman McLaren, Alexeieff
RHYTHMUS 21	Hans Richter
STUDIES	Oskar Fischinger
GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE	Douglass Crockwell

PROGRAM NOTES

A short survey of the animated film, this program attempts to examine the artistic invention and plasticity that has been this form of cinema's dominant characteristic—even when, as in the work of Walt Disney—it has been primarily concerned with the subject of entertainment rather than with experiment in the art of the film.

DRAME CHEZ LES FANTOCHES (French 1907) By Emile Cohl. The second of the French pioneer's cartoons.

GERTIE THE DINOSAUR (American 1909) By Winsor McCay. Animated cartoons had previously made their appearance on the screen in 1907, with Emile Cohl's work. It is Winsor McCay, however, who must be regarded as the true father of Felix The Cat and all the cinema's other delightfully anthropomorphic creatures.

NEWMAN'S LAUGH-O-GRAMS (American 1920) Walt Disney's first film drawing rather than animated cartoon.

SKELETON DANCE (American 1929) By Walt Disney. Disney has since rarely approached the freshness, playfulness, and plasticity of this, his first Silly Symphony.

STEAMBOAT WILLIE (American 1928) By Walt Disney. Disney evolved what the Disney studio refers to as the "mouse form" in the spring of 1928, after many experiments during the course of which the mouse was tried out with various kinds of clothes, ears, and expressions. This was the second Mickey Mouse cartoon, and the first one with sound.

CARMEN (German 1933) An animated silhouette film by the famous artist, Lotte Reiniger.

CHANTS POPULAIRES (French Canadian contemporary) A selection of unusual animated cartoons produced for the Canadian Film Board by Norman McLaren and Alexander Alexeieff.

RHYTHMUS 21 (German 1921) By Hans Richter. This was the first "pure" or abstract film to be created. Richter and his colleague, Eggeling, had previously experimented with the graphic development of form in a time sequence by the use of scroll drawings. (One of Richter's scroll drawings hangs on the left wall of the Art In Cinema gallery show.) The difficulty of animating these complex designs on film resulted in Richter taking the simple form the screen gave him—the square and the rectangle—upon which to base his first abstract film. Theo van Doesburg sponsored the film's premiere in Paris, introducing Richter as a Dane because of post-World War I feeling against the Germans.

STUDIES (German 1929-30) By Oskar Fischinger. In answer to repeated requests, we are including here several of Fischinger's Black and White Studies shown last week. Unfortunately, the sound track on COLORATURA and STUDY #6 is in such poor shape we shall run these two without sound. However, they lose none of their quality of sheer movement, so successful in imparting a keen visual sensation.

GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE (American contemporary) By Douglass Crockwell. Mr. Crockwell writes: "About eight years ago I set up an animation easel with the camera mounted overhead and the work area arranged much as a draughtman's desk, except that the working area consisted of several movable layers of glass slightly separated. The basic idea was to paint continuing pictures on these various layers with plastic paint, adding at times and removing at times, and to a certain extent these early attempts were successful. This basic process was changed from time to time with varying results and I have still made no attempt yet to stabilize the method. Somewhat as a consequence of this has been the fragmentary character of the work produced." (Acquired through the courtesy of Mr. Crockwell)

—Frank Stauffacher

Musical accompaniment to this program selected by Paul Velguth and Sydney Rawson. The next program in this series will be CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS IN AMERICA and will include the premiere screening of the San Francisco produced psychological study THE POTTED PSALM by Sydney Peterson and James Broughton, the complete audio-visual studies of John and James Whitney, and Maya Deren's latest experiment in space-time: RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME.

[The title of Douglass Crockwell's film is actually "Glens Falls Sequence," and Stauffacher frequently misspells Peterson's first name, which is Sidney.]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Mrs. Noble Hamilton from Paul Ballard, 10/30/46

The Ballard Film Society
2036 Glencoe Way
Hollywood 28, California
Phone HEmpstead 5512
Paul Ballard, Founder-Director

Oct. 30, 1946

Mrs. Noble Hamilton
San Francisco Art Museum
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mrs. Hamilton,

I think that your present film project at the Museum is a wonderful opportunity for those who are interested in the cinema as an art form. I have actively been working to achieve similar accomplishments here in Hollywood. It is a very difficult and discouraging work. There is such a great indifference in the studios to anything pertaining to films in terms of culture or treatment as an art form. My film society has been active for the past two years and it is just now catching on. I obtain my films from many sources but mainly from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. I have noted that some of the films listed in your series are difficult to find. I have a fairly comprehensive catalog but there are certain films which I did not know were available. I would appreciate knowing the source of the following films and if they are available on 16mm.

UBERFALL—Erno Metzler
OSKAR FISCHINGER works
RHYTHM IN LIGHT—Mary Ellen Butte
Mysteres Du CHATEAU DU DE—Man Ray
LE SANG D'UN POETE* Cocteau
Hans Richter's latest film and any others not listed.

I would like to have a similar series here in Hollywood and any help you can give me will be greatly appreciated. I learned about your work through Miss Arledge of Pasadena. I am showing here experimental dance film in Dec. I have had the opportunity to see the footage thus far and it shows great potential for dance films and the ability of the medium to free the dancer from the limitations of space. I , too , am working on an experimental film using athletes for the subject matter. My film is being shot of athletes against only a sky background and never showing the subjects touching the

ground. I intend to cut the film to symphonic music and am using the symphonic form as my basis. There will be three movements, Medium (with normal free action on parrele, rings, and free ex.), adagio (all action in slow-motion) and the dramatic finale (with dramatic action & shots and contrapuntal cutting). A big attempt but I am trying.

I have found recently a few films that would be of interest to you. Perhaps you do not know the sources so here they are.

Romance Sentimentale—Sergei Eisenstein
Underground (Exp. dance film done by Lewis Jacobs & John Bovington)

both of above available from
Film Classic Exchange Fredonia, New York

Fall Of the House Of Usher—Sibley Watson
available from—Amateur Cinema League NYC.

Mt. Zao (Wonderful Skiing film made in Japan
Photography—great) by—Tatsuichi Okamoto

Early Summer Okamoto
Lullaby Okamoto

These films are available from the American Society Of
Cinematographers Hollywood 28

I spoke to the head of the Academy Of Motion Picture Arts Sciences Library, Miss Betty Franklin, and we would both like to have copies of the catalog which you are presenting along with the Art Film Series currently running.

Thanks so much for any help you may be able to give me. I am so happy that I have learned about your work because I am very anxious to keep up on all progressive work dealing with motion pictures.

Sincerely,

Paul Ballard, Dir. *[hw]*

Program Notes for the 11/1/46 Presentation

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA....SERIES ONE

Sponsored by The San Francisco Museum of Art, Circle Magazine, and
The California School of Fine Arts.

NOVEMBER 1, 1946 CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS IN AMERICA

RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME	Maya Deren
A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA	Maya Deren
GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE	Douglass Crockwell
FIVE FILM EXERCISES	John and James Whitney
THE POTTED PSALM	Sydney Peterson James Broughton

Program Notes

The four films tonight (with the exception of A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY) represent four widely separate approaches to the art of the film. GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE and the Whitneys' FIVE FILM EXERCISES are both non-objective, but in the former, Crockwell is concerned primarily with intuitive expression through the play and hazard of his medium. The fluid imagery is left for each one of us to interpret in our own way. He would be the last to explain the "meaning" in the work. In this sense GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE may be loosely termed "surrealist"—but only in method. But in the Whitney films, the simultaneous creation of sound and image—a revolutionary new conception—is

based upon a carefully preconsidered plan of forms very similar to those in musical composition. The technique, derived through experiments with a new creative instrument, is yet, by their own admission, in a preliminary stage.

Of the two films using realistic imagery, THE POTTED PSALM is, in part, analogous to GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE in attitude and approach. Although symbolism may often seem consciously chosen, the question of rational meaning is unimportant. Here also, the imagery stems from an intuitive, subconscious process. In the Deren Film, again there is the careful working out of a preconceived theoretical study of space-time. The human figures are treated as abstract forms; their movements—accelerated or retarded by the camera—constitute an effort to create a filmic world with its own space, time, and reality.

RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME (1945–46) Conceived and directed by Maya Deren. Photography by Hella Heyman. Choreographic collaboration: Frank Westbrook. Principal performers: Rita Christiana and Frank Westbrook. A Ritual is an action that seeks the realization of its purpose through the exercise of form…the form is the meaning. Being a film ritual (the metamorphosis of the widow into the bride) it is achieved not in spatial terms alone, but in terms of a time created by the camera. Time here is not an emptiness to be measured by spatial activity which may fill it—time not only creates many of the actions and events but constitutes a special integrity of the form as a whole.

This film has erroneously come to be known as the "Anais Nin" film. Anais Nin does appear in the film,—she is the third woman in the doorway—but other than playing this small part, she has had no other hand in its conception or creation. (Acquired through the courtesy of Maya Deren)

A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA (1945) By Maya Deren and Tally Beatty. (This film repeated tonight by popular request.) Together, the dancer and space perform a dance which cannot exist but on film. (Acquired through the courtesy of Maya Deren)

GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE (1938–46) By Douglass Crockwell. (This film repeated tonight by popular request.) Mr. Crockwell writes: "About eight years ago I set up an animation easel with the camera mounted overhead and the work area arranged much as a draughtsman's desk, except that the working area consisted of several movable layers of glass slightly separated. The basic idea was to paint continuing pictures on these various layers with plastic paint, adding at times and removing at times, and to a certain extent these early attempts were successful. This basic process was changed from time to time with varying results and I have still made no attempt yet to stabilize the method. Somewhat as a consequence of this has been the fragmentary character of the work produced." (Acquired through the courtesy of Mr. Crockwell)

FIVE FILM EXERCISES (1943–44) By John and James Whitney. These revolutionary film studies are the result of a film technique—still imperfect—whereby sound and image can be created simultaneously. The Whitneys do not yet consider these results as works of art. Thus they have called them "exercises." Their effort is twofold: To create an instrument that might make accessible to the individual creator a more imposing element of the cinema medium, and the conviction that "the bi-sensory experience of auditory and visual form unified within a common time structure is intensified by the equal purity of both plastic and auditory elements."

Briefly, the sound is produced synthetically by photographing a controlled graph activated by a series of pendulums upon a sound track. The sound comes into being only as sound when projected through a sound projector. The visual forms are created by manipulation of paper cut-outs and re-shot on color film through an optical printer which affords unlimited flexibility. Photographs of this equipment hang on the left wall, center panel, of the Art in Cinema gallery show.

FILM #1 (1943) Begins with a three beat announcement drawn out in time which thereafter serves as a figure to divide the four sections. Each return of this figure is more condensed, and finally used in reverse to conclude the film.

FILMS #2 & #3 (1944) Two short fragments resulting from experiments in controlling the mechanical development of the instrument.

FILM #4 (1944) The entire film is divided into four consecutive chosen approaches—the fourth section devoted to a reiteration and extension of the original material.

Section One: Movement used primarily to achieve spatial depth. An attempt is made to delay sound in a proportional relationship to the depth of its corresponding image in the screen space—a near image is heard sooner than one in the distance. Upon this basis the screen space is assigned a tonal interval. Concludes with a frontal assault of all imagery used.

Section Two: Consists of four short subjects in natural sequence treated to an alternate development of contraction and expansion of their rhythms.

Section Three: A fifteen second visual sequence which constitutes the leading idea is begun every five seconds after the fashion of the canon form in music. This section is built upon the establishing of complex tonal masses which oppose complex image masses, progressively shortened in duration.

Section Four: Begins with a statement in sound and image which at its conclusion is inverted and retrogresses to its beginning.

FILM # 5 (1944) Opens with a short canonical statement of a theme upon which the entire film is constructed. The canon is repeated in contrasting variations by means of color. A second section poses the same image in deep film space. The image unfolds itself repeatedly, leaving the receding image to continue on smaller and smaller. (The forgoing notes condensed from complete discussions of these films supplied by John and James Whitney. Acquired through the courtesy of John and James Whitney.)

THE POTTED PSALM (1946) Written, produced and directed by Sydney Peterson and James Broughton. Photography by Sydney Peterson. Music by Francean Campbell. Shot in San Francisco during the summer of 1946, this film undertakes a visual penetration of the chaotic inner complexities of our post World War society, heretofore the preoccupation of serious modern writers. The film medium is potentially a more natural one than literature in dealing with the sub-verbal realms of the subconscious since it is more analogous to the dream world and its imagery. But the contents of the dream world are divorced from rationality and possess a necessary ambiguity. Thus the only possible approach to a film of this sort—indeed, in a sense, to any work of art—is to accept the ambiguity without interjection of the question: why? Since we all possess an infinite universe of ambiguity within us, these images are meant to play upon that world, and not our rational senses.

Mr. Peterson writes regarding this imagery: "From a field of dry grass, to the city, to the gravestone marked 'mother,' and made more specific by the accident ('objective hazard') of a crawling caterpillar, to the form of a spiral, thence to a tattered palm and a bust of a male on a tomb, the camera, after a series of movements parodic of the sign of the cross, fastens on the profile of a young man looking into a store window. All these scenes are susceptible of a dozen different interpretations based upon visual connections. The connections may or may not be rational. In an intentionally realistic work the question of rationality is not a consideration. What is being stated has its roots in myth and strives through the chaos of commonplace data toward the kind of inconstant allegory which is the only substitute for myth in a world too lacking in such symbolic formulations."

The surface springboard from which this exploration is launched is a familiar enough condition to psychology—the Oedipus complex—which in this case reverses itself. Here, rather clinical in approach, we see it through the eyes of no one party concerned. It is the fact, and from here rises, or perhaps descends, the plunge into the ambiguity of the subconscious.

The music for this film, written by the Canadian composer, Francean Campbell, now living in San Francisco, is scored for clarinet, violin, piano, ocarina, xylophone, bells and percussion. The music is not meant to be an expression of the film's contents, but to be the composer's personal comment upon them.

—Frank Stauffacher

The next program in this series will be FANTASY INTO DOCUMENTARY

RIEN QUE LES HEURES by Alberto Cavalcanti
BERLIN: THE SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY by Walther Ruttmenn
THE CITY by Ralph Steiner and Willard van Dyke

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Herman G. Weinberg from Frank Stauffacher, 11/8/46

Nov 8, 1946

Herman G. Weinberg
1600 Broadway
Suite 904
N.Y.C.

Dear Mr. Weinberg,

The catalogue, containing the excerpts from your Hans Richter index which you have so kindly permitted us to use, is not yet completed, but should be by the end of this month, and we will send you several copies at that time. It is rather unfortunate that we haven't been able to get it out at least during half of our current film series, but all the delays have been unavoidable. Nevertheless, there has been considerable interest shown in it, and will be still useful for our second series. With each program so far we have distributed mimeographed notes in place of the catalogue. (Actually it has long since ceased to be a catalogue, it has become more of a book than a catalogue.)

The film series continues to be a very successfully attended venture, and we continue to have to turn almost as many people away as who attend. One reason for this is that we had exceptionally good cooperation from the press, and another reason is that most of the films had never before been seen in San Francisco. The whole thing has been tremendously stimulating to both the public and to those of us at the Museum who have organized it, and we'd like to continue, if possible.

Being more or less new to the field, a good many small annoying controversies arise now and then. For example, there has been considerable controversy over the matter of musical accompaniment to certain of the silent films. There is no particular criticism of the music itself—for we have had the cooperation of several good musical authorities—but the argument seems to exist between the purists who want no music at all, and those who do—providing it fits the particular film. I would like to get your attitude on this question as I know you have had to deal with it before. Our practice, so far, has been to run the films privately several times for our musical selectors who time the film or make up a rather careful "script," and the records [are] selected on this basis.

We appreciate your kind offer to help us locate films for the next series. There will be a good many repeats as there have been requests for them. But there is a great deal of material we would like to get in addition—although it may be difficult, if not impossible. I will list some of them here. We have no way of knowing whether or not they are worth showing—no critical basis of selection.

THE LOVE OF ZERO	Robert Florey
MARCHE DES MACHINES	Eugene Deslav
BRUMES D'AUTOMNE	Dmitri Kirsanov
LES AVENTURES DE ROBERT MACAIRE	Jean Epstein
THE WAY	Francis Bruguiere
LA FLAMME BLANCHE	Charles Dekeukelaire
IDYLLE A LA PLAGE	Henri Storck
LIGHT RHYTHMS	Brguiere and Blakeston
NIGHT ON BARE MOUNTAIN	Alexander Alexieff
LIGHT PENETRATES THE DARKNESS	Vavra and Pilat
PANDORA'S BOX	Pabst
THE ADVENTURES OF DAVID GRAY	Karl Dreyer
EN RADE	Cavalcanti
BORDERLINE	Kenneth MacPherson
DISQUE 957	Germaine Dulac
MONKEY'S MOON	Kenneth MacPherson
IMPATIENCE	Charles Dekeukelaire
VOUS VERREZ LA SEMAINE PROCHAINE	Alberto Cavalcanti

FOOTHILLS	Kenneth MacPherson
NEUROSE	Wow and Zitch
VERS LES ROBOTS	Eugene Deslav
MONTPARNASSE	Eugene Deslav

Besides, could you help us out, if possible, with addresses of the following artists?

Gloria and Emlen Etting
Dwinell Grant
Mylon Meriam

Also, if your own AUTUMN-FIRE is available.

The films listed above have been taken at random from various books and publications and, as I say, there is no basis we have for selection. Furthermore, there is hardly a chance that any of these will be on 16mm. However, we hope to install a 35mm setup for next series—although this is very tentative. Also, the list must appear to you a rather chaotic group. But we would be very grateful to you for information leading to any other films that might fit into our scheme.

One more question on sources—Any of the Soviet animated films.

I am enclosing a press review which might be of interest, and also a complete list of the films we have shown or will show on this present series.

Again, many thanks for your kind offer of help. We will send copies of the book as soon as it comes out.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Hans Richter, 11/9/46 *[hw]*

Nov. 9. 46

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

Sorry that I could not answer your letter earlier. I am in the midst of preparing the recording of our film and it makes loads of trouble.

Here is my answer: I believe firmly that music—for the silent Avantgarde-films is <u>essential</u>. Of course it depends <u>what</u> music. I played Eggeling, Rhythm 21, with Bach. Duchamp with Ravel. Leger with African drums to start with then a polka, then a boogie woogie. My "ghosts" also with polka & boogie woogie 1/2 & 1/2.—That is just to give you an idea that I have <u>no</u> inhibitions to use whatever music there is.—I do <u>not</u> belief in the synchronicity between image & sound. That was very good (and very seducing) when Fischinger did his first film in 31.—but it is my opinion <u>not</u> the <u>idea</u> of how sound <u>should</u> be used because it becomes that way an <u>illustration</u> (or in the Hollywood movies) underlining a mood "sympathetically"—or it becomes as in Fischingers films <u>the</u> story and the image is a mere illustration without a structure and a meaning of its own.—I agree with Man Ray that we have to <u>avoid</u> the complete synchronicity, we should find a way to let the sound and the picture move on its <u>own</u> in the same <u>direction</u> but souverein [sovereign?] nevertheless. (I have tried that in 1929 in my film "Alles dreht sich" (everything turns) [*Everything Turns, Everything Revolves*] and I try that in my new picture again. That refers as well to the spoken word as to the musical or other sound.—of course we have to "influence" the audience that way—in showing them our point, again and again. I think that "counterpointing" is the way mod. art, mod. music and mod. literature is going.—there is a lot more to say about it—but I think I was long enough for a letter and perhaps for your patience.

I send you here 3 photos for your catalogue.—2 of the "Max Ernst" sequence and one of mine (the blue man). I add a short description of my film which I ask you to send me back as soon as you can, because its my last copy.

May I ask you something else? My exhibition is closing Monday here. I should like to have it go over the country. Would your museum be interested? I have sold 3 of the paintings but they could go along nevertheless.

Thank you very much

I hope to hear from you

My best regards

Hans Richter
123 E. 60th
New York 22 NY

P.S. I think [unreadable] for Bunuel is good Because it brings out something that is implicite in the films—but not explicite

P.S2 I hope Mrs. Hamilton has received the contract!? I send it away immediately after I got it.

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Lewis Jacobs, 11/12/46

Tuesday November 12, [19]46

Dear Frank Stauffacher:

Here is a program note for Footnote To Fact: Footnote to Fact (1933) is one part of a proposed 4 part film intended to document the depression of the thirties, which was to be called As I Walk. The other three parts were never completed: the depression! They were called: Highway 66 (the scenario for this appeared in *Experimental Cinema*, No. 4), Faces in the Street, Night Between the Rivers. Miscellaneous shots were taken for each of these parts but not enough to organize anykind of structural whole. Consequently Footnote To Fact must stand alone.

The film was to be post-synchronized, using sound in a stream of consciousness technique—including snatches of jazz, natural sounds, modern poetry and inner monologue.

Since I believe that the first principle and chief characteristic of the film medium is movement, movement plays the dominant role in the architecture of the film.

I hope this is sufficient for your program notes. Use as little or as much as you see fit. The film goes off air express tomorrow noon—Wednesday. You should receive it Thursday. Best wishes, and please send me a copy of the program.

Sincerely,

Lewis Jacobs *[hw]*
Lewis Jacobs

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Paul Ballard from Frank Stauffacher, 11/46

Paul Ballard
2036 Glencoe Way
Hollywood 28, Calif.

Dear Mr. Ballard,

Mrs. Hamilton has given me your letter of Oct. 30, and I will do my best to answer your questions. Thank you very much for the sources you enclosed. Our series has been so overwhelmingly successful that we are already casting around for material for another series sometime early next spring, and the items you suggested will come in handy.

It is so very peculiar that a series of this sort has had "standing room only" results here in San Francisco. Of course the real reason for this lies in our original efforts to publicize it before hand as much as possible, and to do this we interested the Press in the project, and they seemed to go for it—reason being that most of the films had never been shown here before. The result was that we have had enough response to fill the hall two nights a week instead of one—or maybe three, as far as I know. It has motivated a swarm of cinematic experimenters, and by next spring we may have some good local talent.

Both Foster and I had heard of your Film Society some time ago, but not before we were last down there, or we would have tried to see you. Our purpose, this last trip, was to see what out-of-the-way films we might be able to get. But the trip resulted in some fruitful general contacts besides. Jay Leyda helped organize the programs, and then he came here to San Francisco for a day and helped us gather program notes, which has not been an easy task.

The Hans Richter film you ask about—which was mentioned on our schedule—was supposed to be DREAMS THAT MONEY CAN BUY made in collaboration with Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Calder, Man Ray, Fernand Leger, Max Ernst. Richter is still working on it. It will be 35mm., color, and I believe they are going to try to distribute it commercially. As you probably know, it has been financed by, among others, Peggy Guggenheim, and the Art of This Century Films, Inc. Thus I'm afraid it will be rather difficult to get it for groups or series such as ours at first—although you can never tell. I have been corresponding with Richter, and he has been most cooperative all along. In lieu of DREAMS he loaned us his VORMITTAKSPUK (Ghosts Before Noon) which is a shorter, older film on 35mm which we are showing on the 22nd when we have 35mm projectors set up for Cocteau's film.

UBERFALL is now available from The Museum of Modern Art on 16mm.

You should be able to get a great many Fischingers on 16mm from Fischinger himself. Address: Oskar Fischinger, 1010 Hammond Street. Hollywood. I believe he would appreciate your interest in his work because of that very neglect of the film as art about which you spoke in your letter; Fischinger originally came to this country from Germany in order to produce his abstract films in the world's movie capitol, which, of course, has shown practically no interest in them.

RHYTHM IN LIGHT is a short done in abstraction to Grieg's Anitra's Dance, and is a good contrast to Fischinger's type of synchronization with music. It is available from Brandon Films, and appears on page 99 of their 1945 Blue Book Catalogue.

We did not run Man Ray's MYSTERES DU CHATEAU DE DE. Man Ray has the only print of this on 16mm., and he felt that it was in such poor shape he'd rather not show it. However we borrowed his EMAK BAKIA and L'ETOILE DE MER from him on 16mm. I do not think the Museum of Modern Art has either of these on 16mm size.

LE SANG D'UN POETE has been rented from Martin Lewis, New York; it is still receiving commercial distribution, and we have had to pay a commercial price for it. But since it had never been shown here in San Francisco, we felt it justified. There is no 16mm print of this available that I know of.

On Nov. 1 we had the premiere of a San Francisco produced experimental film on 16mm that you might be interested in. THE POTTED PSALM by Sidney Peterson and James Broughton. I will give you Mr. Peterson's address: 2437 Washington Street, S.F.

We ran a short film—a portion of a documentary started some years ago by Lewis Jacobs, called FOOTNOTE TO FACT. And if you are interested you might contact Mr. Jacobs—333 N. Pointsettia Drive, Hollywood.

I think that covers most of your questions. I have sent out a list of films that I'd like to get for the next series. Herman G. Weinberg, 1600 Broadway, New York seems to know of a number of good sources for this type of thing.

We have discovered that a good filler-in are the CHANTS POPULAIRES produced by Norman MacClaren and Alexander Alexeieff for the Canadian National Film Board. They are available from Brandon or the International Theatrical and Television Corp. However, they need a good deal of personal editing—cutting out the community sing business, and just leaving the animations, and then too, not all of the animations are good. But some of them are well worth the trouble. At least our audience gives them a big hand.

We would also like to show Miss Arledge's film sometime. And your own sounds very interesting. We will be looking forward to seeing that, too.

As for our catalogue—by this time it has grown into a book, and it should be ready for distribution the end of this month. Throughout the current series we have been giving out mimeographed program notes for each program, and since the book is now valueless as program note material for this particular series, we have added a great deal of other material, cuts, etc., and plan to sell it as a book. As soon as it becomes available, we'll send you several copies.

Again, thank you very much for your interest in our series, and for the information you have sent. If you come across anymore, or if we can help you in any way, please, let us know.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher
Art in Cinema Series

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Robert Florey, 2/47 [?]

February 27, 1947

Mr. Frank Stauffacher
Museum of Art
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

Early in 1928, Mr. Simon Gould, then manager of the 8th Street Cinema Playhouse in New York offered to give World Wide exploitation to my experimental shorts, including "SKYSCRAPER SYMPHONY" "THE COFFIN MAKER" "LOVE OF ZERO" "LIFE AND DEATH OF A HOLLYWOOD EXTRA" and to that effect I gave him <u>all</u> the negatives and prints that I had.

I regret to say that I have not heard from Mr. Gould since 1929, I have never received any account of the rentals or sales of my pictures which were shown for years in Europe and, as a matter of fact I do not even know in which laboratory my negatives were stored by Mr. Gould.

Several times during the past twenty years I had some requests similar to yours and I would have been more than happy to loan the prints of these pictures without any charge if I had been able to locate Mr. Simon Gould. If you have a correspondant in New York and if such correspondant might trace and find the negatives of my films I'll be only too glad to have some positive prints made up for you; I always had a certain "tenderness" for these early efforts because I made them for so little (about $I00 each) and with such great enthusiasm!

If you do hear anything about them, please do let me know, I should be extremely grateful to you.

Very sincerely Yours,

R. Florey *[hw]*

P-S: I must say that I was rather puzzled yesterday when I read in the Hollywood Reporter that you had booked my films and that you were going to show them soon in San Francisco, I was about to write you when your letter forwarded by the Chaplin Studios reached me.

11411 Ayrshire Road
West Los Angeles 24
California.

[The original of Florey's letter to Stauffacher has the date 2/27/47, but the text and Stauffacher's 2/6/47 letter to James W. Moore make clear that Florey mailed his letter earlier.]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to James W. Moore from Frank Stauffacher, 2/6/47

Feb. 6, 1947

Mr. James W. Moore
Amateur Cinema League, Inc.
420 Lexington Ave.
New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Moore,

I deeply regret the misunderstanding—if I may call it that—of our seeming not to credit the Amateur Cinema League for the three films you have so generously allowed us to use. As you notice, we did not credit the source of any of the films in particular, on the prospectus, one reason being that we were not actually sure of getting some of them at the time of its printing, another reason being that it was compiled and printed at the last minute in time for the March mailing and therefore does contain many discrepancies. This prospectus is by no means the only notice of the films we intend showing. It was issued only to inform members that we would have Series Two in April, the titles we intend showing, and the dates.

For each program we are preparing as detailed a set of program notes as we can gather, with the sources, credits, etc.—in the same manner as we did on Series One. These program notes are printed and distributed to the audience. In addition to this we have been fortunate enough to have been able—on Series One—to attract the art and music critics of the local papers, and to have been able to give considerable credit and notice to the films themselves, in this manner. The interest among the critics, in Series One, has promised a similar interest in Series Two, and I assure you that they will again help out in the matter of credit and publicity.

As you probably know, any cinema activity of this sort begins quite dubiously. We were only able to make a success of the last one by arranging for a good list of programs—things usually difficult to obtain (BLOOD OF A POET, LOT IN SODOM, for example). Many of these films are prohibitive because they are still getting commercial distribution, and thus for groups, museums, etc. they are usually out of the question. Only by adequate publicity, the help of the newspaper critics, and putting the program on in a thorough way, with detailed program notes, etc. were we able to go through

with it without a loss. This also includes giving as large a sum as we possibly could to such independent experimenters in film as John and James Whitney, Oskar Fischinger, Maya Deren, etc. The Art in Cinema Society was formed with this sort of thing in mind—to provide an outlet for the obscure, non-commercial film-worker, and to stimulate them by paying them as much as the traffic will bear.

The matter of rental costs has varied tremendously, from none at all (Douglass Crockwell, Sidney Peterson, etc.) to $100.00 for one night's showing of BLOOD OF A POET and LOT IN SODOM. (This also entailed renting 35mm. equipment and a union operator.) But we have at all times been agreeable to any rental fee, if we could possibly afford it. We feel that this has been the factor for creating an aware and interested audience with a type of film that generally finds little opportunity for performance.

I seem to have gotten off the track of my original theme, but I wish to tell you, in a general way, our intentions and operation. I assure, however, that the Amateur Cinema League will be given due credit for the films, both in the newspapers and in the program notes themselves, and I was considerably upset to receive your letter March 3 containing this "misunderstanding."

Thank you very much for your information on Dr. Watson. I might add that I have received a letter from Robert Florey in which he says that all of his experimental films were turned over to a Mr. Simon Gould, in 1929—the manager of the 8th Street Cinema Playhouse in New York, on the understanding that Mr. Florey would receive world-wide distribution of them. But that is the last he heard of them. He offered to make us prints from the negs if we could trace them down, but it sounds rather futile. Nevertheless, I have written a number of letters regarding this.

Thank you again, and I hope you will accept my apologies, and our desires to acknowledge and give credit for all of our films—indeed this is part of our function.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

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[The Amateur Cinema League supplied Art in Cinema with The Fall of the House of Usher *(1928), by James Sibley Watson and Melville Webber, shown April 11, 1947;* Kaleidoscopio *(1946), by the Cuban Roberto Machado, and* Mister Motorboat's Last Stand *(1930), by John Florey, shown April 25, 1947.]*

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James W. Moore, 2/7/47

Amateur Cinema League, Inc.
420 Lexington Avenue
New York 17, N.Y.
[. . .]

7 February 1947

Mr. Frank Stauffacher
San Francisco Museum of Art
The Civic Center
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

I have your good letter of the fourth and am pleased to know that you feel you can use our print of USHER [*The Fall of the House of Usher*] in a coming program.

You might be interested in knowing, in connection with its producer, that Dr. J. Sibley Watson is a Charter Member of the Amateur Cinema League (founded in 1926 by Hiram Percy Maxim, the Hartford, Conn., scientist) and that Dr. Watson was elected to Fellowship in the ACL in 1939.

I have checked quite a number of source listings, and regret I cannot track down Robert Florey exactly. The last trace I find of him was in 1943 when he was working on "The Desert Song" for Warner Brothers. Perhaps they have a lead on him.

Of the three of our 1946 Ten Best winners you mention, we now have a Kodachrome copy of KALEIDOSCOPIO, in which I feel you definitely will be interested. In a couple of months, we expect to have a copy of MOTION, in which you may be interested. We probably shall not have a copy of DESIGN IN WHITE, and I doubt if you would be interested in any case. It actually is little more than a brief collection of some very beautiful—but wholly unexperimental—scenes of ice and snow.

I am a bit worried about your not having received USHER as yet. I trust you will keep me advised.

Cordially yours,

James W. Moore *[hw]*
James W. Moore

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James W. Moore, 2/28/47

[. . .]

28 February 1947

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

This will acknowledge receipt of your interesting letters of February 13 and 25.

I am happy to say that both KALEIDOSCOPIO and MOTORBOAT will be free for the April 25th date. I am, therefore, planning to send them out of here on April 14, to insure their arrival and to allow you a few days for previewing, etc. KALEIDOSCOPIO is a brand new dupe in one piece of Kodachrome and will not need any inspection. MOTORBOAT, however, is rather old and probably has a few splices, etc., in it. You very definitely better have it checked over before screening.

The films will go Express Collect, which will obviate the necessity of your remitting for the outward shipment. We understand that you will return them prepaid.

Herewith a bit more data on Watson and Webber. Dr. J. Sibley Watson, at the time of producing USHER, was a retired M. D. He comes from an old family in Rochester (vide: the street he lived on was named Sibley Place) and, although he has made one or two publicity films for Kodak, was never genuinely employed by them.

USHER was shot on 35mm. film with, I believe, a Bell & Howell studio-type camera. All production was carried on in a large barn back of Watson's house, which was practically converted into a studio. Watson should be credited for the camera work and the many cinematic effects, while Webber was responsible for the settings and costumes, etc.

Dr Watson is today on the Advisory Editorial Board of "American Cinematographer," publication of A. S. C., of which he is a member.

Glad to hear you found Bob Florey. Best of luck on the screenings.

J. W. M.
James Moore *[hw]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Eli Willis, 3/7/47

CINEMA
8066 Beverly Boulevard
Los Angeles 36, California
Wyoming 4926

March 7, 1947

[. . .]

Dear Frank:

Your program came this morning. It's wonderfully diversified and a pity its not available in LA or I'd subscribe immediately.

This stationary heading developed shortly after your brief visit here. I've received backing to put out a monthly mag on films aimed at "intelligent movie-goers." It won't be "arty" or academic, not another Experimental Cinema or Hollywood Quarterly. We do want to reach the broad national audience of intelligent people who won't stoop to a fan mag. but do want something critical and lively on motion pictures.

The title, simply, Cinema. Size—9″×12″, 24 pages; smart format, alert writing plus a few photos. Price 25¢. Initial printings quite small to feel out the market. Unluckily, the backing is on a slim shoe-string so that we have to move quite slowly. First issue scheduled for May 1st.

The staff now includes myself as editor and Herb Margolis as associate. I can definitely name the following contributors: Arthur Rosenheimer, Lewis Jacobs, Irving Lerner, Jay Leyda, Howard Salemson, Robert Josephs, Fritz Lang, Martin Field, Helen Colton, Max Kniepper, Kenneth MacGowan, etc. The list expands daily, including critics as well as people in the industry.

The main problem, we feel, is getting the mag in the hands of the interested people. For this, I wonder if you could help us out. Specifically, would it be possible to get a copy of your mailing list for the "art in cinema" showings and your accompanying book. I need hardly explain how very much such a list would be helpful to us, especially at this beginning stage. If this can be arranged in any way, please let me know.

I'd also appreciate it if you could send me the names of some of the SF bookstores that would be likely places to handle such a mag. Our national distribution will be through such stores.

And, of course, any articles that you (or friends) would like to contribute would be more than welcome. (Though we're in the unenviable position of not being able to pay.)

If your booklet is out in time (April 1st), we'd like to cover it in first issue book review section.

Regards from the Jacobs and best to Dick [Richard Foster].

Sincerely,

Eli *[hw]*
E. S. Willis.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

The Art in Cinema Society of The San Francisco Museum of Art
presents

art in cinema

series two

Five Friday Nights at Eight o'clock

April 4 • Experiments in Fantasy

THE LOVE OF ZERO by Robert Florey. **WHITE FLOOD** by Lawrence Morton and Hans Eisler.

WAXWORKS, the great German fantasy directed by Paul Leni, with Conrad Veidt, Emil Jannings and Werner Krauss. (or) **LE CHAPEAU DE PAILLE d'ITALIE** by Rene Clair.

April 11 • Trickery and Surrealism

Includes the work of Georges Melies: **A TRIP TO THE MOON, THE DOCTOR'S SECRET, THE CONQUEST OF THE POLE,** and **THE PALACE OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.**

Rene Clair's **PARIS QUI DORT (The Crazy Ray).** Sarah Catherine Arledge's **DANCE FILM** (First public showing).

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER by Dr. J. S. Watson and Melville Webber, a shorter, more abstract version of the Poe story, by the directors of **Lot in Sodom.**

LES HOUSARDS DE LA GARDE and **LE VIEUX CHATEAU,** two French surrealist animations.

April 18 • Symbolism and Poetry

Includes **ARSENAL,** Dovjhenko's masterpiece of lyric symbolism.

RAIN, a cinepoem by Joris Ivens.

ROMANCE SENTIMENTALE, Sergei Eisenstein and Alexandrov's first sound film, shot in Paris by Edward Tisse.

DEATH DAY, originally a part of the footage for Eisenstein's **Que Viva Mexico.**

UNDERGROUND directed by Lewis Jacobs and Thomas Bouchard, with John Bovington.

April 25 • Ingenuity and Wit

Includes the work of Emile Cohl, Ferdinand Zecca, and Jean Durand: **LE PEINTRE NEO-IMPRESSIONISTE, UNE DAME VRAIMENT BIEN, JOYEUX MICROBES, WHENCE DOES HE COME?, SLIPPERY JIM, THE PUMPKIN RACE, SCENES OF CONVICT LIFE, ONESIME HORLOGER.**

Dr. Roberto Machado's **KALEIDESCOPIO,** John Flory's **MR. MOTORBOAT'S LAST STAND,** and the recent work of John and James Whitney, and Douglass Crockwell.

May 2 • Two Russian Experimental Groups

THE CLOAK directed by Grigori Kozintzev and Leonid Trauberg. (Excerpt only) .

BY THE LAW produced by the Kuleshov Workshop; a Russian interpretation of one of Jack London's most psychological stories.

AUTUMN-FIRE by Herman G. Weinberg.

Studies 9, 10, and 12 by Oskar Fischinger (not previously shown).

With Series Two, the Art In Cinema Society, jointly sponsored by the San Francisco Museum of Art, the California School of Fine Arts, and Circle Magazine, presents the results of further explorations in the field of the Avantgarde and experimental film.

The interest shown in Series One by the San Francisco area audience was so gratifying that the Museum has made the activities of the Art In Cinema Society a permanent part of the Museum's functions. In addition, the Society will assist other interested groups elsewhere in preparing a similar series. The catalogue published in conjunction with Series One will provide a ready-made program for such a showing. A series is now in preparation for a Spring, 1947 showing at the University of California, which will bring the best of the Series One films to an East Bay audience. The balloting by the audience at the end of Series One provided the basis for selecting the University series. (The two most popular films in last Fall's showing were THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI and BLOOD OF A POET).

The Avantgarde and experimental cinema embraces all attitudes of the so-called "temper of modern art"--including such forms of expression as surrealism, abstraction, realism, symbolism, non-objective form, etc. The cinema as an art form has undergone—and is undergoing still—all of the exploratory phases that characterize the history of other modern art forms. The Art In Cinema Society believes that the showing of these films, even though some of them only partially realize their intent, is the best and most direct way of stimulating interest in, and furthering an understanding of this new art form.

NOTE: The Films have been drawn from many widely separated sources; from The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, from various other distributors, and from the individual artists themselves. The Society does not maintain a film library at the present time, but if the members of the Society's interest is maintained, and as funds become available, a small, select library will be started. We ask your indulgence when programs must be changed due to circumstances beyond our control—shipping failures, poor quality of prints, etc.

The series is organized on the same basis as Series One: Non-profit, non-commercial, with admission by series subscription only. Series tickets are $3.60 for the public, and $3.00 for Museum Members. Seats will not be reserved and seating limited to 400 persons.

Illustration 9. Program announcement for the second series, spring 1947. An order blank followed the text.

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Second Series, 3/47

The Art in Cinema Society of The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

ART IN CINEMA series two

Five Friday Nights at Eight o'clock

April 4 Experiments in Fantasy

THE LOVE OF ZERO by Robert Florey.
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WAXWORKS, the great German fantasy directed by Paul Leni, with Conrad Veidt, Emil Jannings and Werner Krauss. (or) LE CHAPEAU DE PAILLE d'ITALIE by Rene Clair.

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[An order blank followed.]

Program Announcement for the First University of California at Berkeley Series, 3/47

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Presents

ART in CINEMA

A series of five nights of AVANTGARDE FILMS to be shown at Wheeler Hall, University of California Campus, starting April 1, 1947, at 8:00 P. M.

Sponsored by:

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
CIRCLE MAGAZINE
ART IN CINEMA SOCIETY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

PROGRAM MANAGER: GEORGE LEITE
MUSIC SELECTIONS BY: PAUL VELGUTH

April 1 TUESDAY

RAIN—an impressionistic study of a rainstorm in Amsterdam by the famous Dutch Director Joris Ivens.
STUDIES IN BLACK & WHITE—a series of non-objective forms synchronized with familiar music. By the creator of the Bach TOCCATA & FUGUE section of Disney's FANTASIA, Oskar Fischinger.
CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI—an early German film famous for its abstract set designs, directed by Robert Wiene.

April 9 WEDNESDAY

RHYTHM IN LIGHT—a series of abstract forms synchronized with music from ANITRA'S DANCE, and filmed by Mary Ellen Bute.
FILM EXERCISES 4 & 5—non-objective forms synchronized with a new conception of music, by John and James Whitney.
THE GOLEM—the original German version of this fantasy of the mythical medieval figure who was to release the Jew from oppression, directed by Paul Weggener.

April 15 TUESDAY

JAMMIN' THE BLUES—an impressionistic study of Negro jazz musicians directed by Gjon Mili, produced by Warner Bros. (Courtesy Warner Bros.)
ENTR'ACTE—Dadaist film by Rene Clair.
BALLET MACANIQUE—semi-abstract film by Fernand Leger, the painter.
MENILMONTANTE—a short film made for less than $100 in Paris; a sensitive portrayal of a young girl in love. Directed by a young Russian émigré, Dmitri Kirsanov.

APRIL 22 TUESDAY

L'ETOILE DE MER—an impressionistic film by Man Ray, using interesting camera techniques.
EMAK BAKIA—an abstract film by Man Ray, the first abstract photographer.
COQUILLE ET CLERGYMAN—a study of the psychological problems of a clergyman, directed by Germaine Dulac.
MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON—a psychological study of suicide by the young American director, Maya Deren.
STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR THE CAMERA—Maya Deren's camera study of Talley Beatty, a dancer formerly with Martha Graham.

April 29 TUESDAY

GLEN FALLS SEQUENCE—a curious surrealist film using abstract, organic forms, by Douglass Crockwell.
UN CHIEN ANDALOU—most famous of all surrealist films, made by Luis Bunuel and Salvidore Dali.
FAHRMANN MARIA—an expressionistic treatment of a legend of love and death in natural exteriors filmed in Germany and directed by Frank Wysbar.

The Art in Cinema Society is a non-profit, non-commercial organization organized under the auspices of the San Francisco Museum of Art, The California School of Fine Arts and Circle Magazine whose purpose is to present films in the modern art traditions. These films have had a limited public showing and are not available for commercial distribution; many of them are from the film library of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Most of them were made by individuals with no commercial backing; the artist made the film simply because he was interested in creating a work of art, not because he expected a large financial return. The purpose in showing these films in this area is to stimulate interest in the creative arts as a whole as well as to stimulate individual artists to creating in this most modern and unknown art form.

Series One, shown last fall at the San Francisco Museum of Art, was intended as a survey of the Avantgarde and experimental cinema. Most of the films above were selected by the Series One Audience as representative of the best of their type. A catalogue, now printing, will be available during the series. The catalogue is a symposium on the avantgarde cinema and is published by the Art in Cinema Society of the San Francisco Museum of Art.

NOTE: Admission by series subscription only. Single tickets will not be sold. Series subscription is $3.00 for all five nights. Use blank below for ordering tickets. (Program subject to change without notice; due to uncertainty of deliveries and quality of prints, minor substitutions may be made.)

(SEATS WILL NOT BE RESERVED)

ART IN CINEMA COMMITTEE
Dr. Grace McCann Morley
Richard Foster
Frank Stauffacher
Dr. Douglas MacAgy
George Leite

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
University Extension, 2441 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4
540 Powell St., San Francisco 21
1730 Franklin St., Oakland 12
Daliel's, 2466 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley
Stephens Union, Berkeley Campus
San Francisco Museum of Art

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Emlen Etting, 3/26/47

Emlen Etting
1922 Panama Street
Philadelphia, Pa.

March 26, 1947

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

I am sending off my two films to you this morning via Air Express since the first program you mention occurs in little over a week and Rail Express you say requires fourteen days. The rental fee is $10.00 per film, which I hope meets with your approval.

Both films (like the others I have made) are film poems wherein the picture, their sequence and development are used as in a poem as opposed to the customary story form. In literature we have the novel, short story, biography, assay, treatise and poem. In the movies we have almost exclusively the novel and documentary. There will be, I feel, a definite place in the future for the movie poem when people ask more of a film than that it should tell a story. In the film poem, music, the dance, the theatre and the artist will all work together. The artist has always been obsessed with adding the dimension of time to his pictures, and the movies, possibly in connection with television afford this opportunity.

Furthering these ideas I enclose an article of mine which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly. I should greatly appreciate your letting me have it back when you return the films.

ORAMUNDE is a film poem elaborated on the idea of Melissande. (Musical accompaniment: Scriabin "Poem of Fire" up to where the figure enters the cave. After the figure collapses to the end: "Saturn" from "The Planets" by Gustav Holst.)

Emlen Etting *[hw]*

[Ettings's Atlantic *piece: "Television and the Artist,"* Atlantic, *Vol. 176, No. 6 (December 1945), pp. 130–132.]*

Letter to James W. Moore from Frank Stauffacher, 3/27/47

March 27, 1947

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Moore,

Thank you very much for your letter of March 11. I'm happy to know that we will still be able to show the League's three films, as originally planned.

You might be interested to learn of my progress in locating the films of Robert Florey—it has an odd twist. As I already wrote to you, I had located Mr. Florey at Charles Chaplin Studios, but he had lost all the prints and negatives of his early films. I then wrote to both Herman G. Weinberg, and Theodore Huff at New York University. Mr. Huff replied that he understood Mr. John Flory had bought the negatives. In answer to my letter, Mr. John Flory informed me that this was a mistake, that he once did own a print of R. Florey's LIFE AND DEATH OF A HOLLYWOOD EXTRA, but a few years ago it was stolen. That is as far as I've gotten, so far.

Paul Ballard in Los Angeles—The Ballard Film Society—has asked me if he might have the three films you are lending us, for previewing—while they are still out here on the Coast. I told him that I would ask you.

Now may I ask a personal question? I've acquired a Bolex 16mm. and I would like to begin some experimenting on my own; I would like to become a member of your League, and would be very grateful for some information.

I will keep you informed of the progress of Series Two and will send on program notes, etc. Incidentally, I would appreciate getting a copy of the issue of MOVIE MAKERS containing a description of Dr. Machado's Film—was it Jan. 47? I cannot locate one here.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James W. Moore, 3/31/47

[. . .]

31 March 1947

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

I have your good letter of the 27th and was interested in your report on the Robert Florey search. It seems amazing that such fine films should so drop out of existence.

I am delighted to learn that you have now personally taken up movie making. It is, of course, the very best way of supplementing one's aesthetic and theoretic knowledge of the subject. I am asking our Membership Manager to send you full data on ACL membership, and we shall look forward to having you with us.

You will be getting on the bandwagon at just the right time, for you will not want to miss a two-part story on an amateur production of Shakespeare's MACBETH, by David Bradley, ACL, which we are running in April and May, or, even more exciting, a two-part discussion of creative cutting (starting in May) by Maya Deren.

I am enclosing our Ten Best review of Machado's film. It appeared in the December, 1946, issue, which announces annually our selections of the Ten Best Films of the year.

I would prefer that you do not send any of our films on to Paul Ballard for previewing. As I understand the Ballard Film Society, it is a privately operated enterprise accruing to the financial welfare of an individual. As such, it is not the kind of group to which we could undertake to loan our Club Library films—so there seems no reason for Mr. Ballard to preview material not available to him.

With best wishes,

James Moore *[hw]*
James W. Moore

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Curtis Harrington, 4/3/47

2600 South Hoover
Los Angeles 7, Calif.

April 3, 1947

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

Here is the work print of my film, FRAGMENT OF SEEKING, which Paul Ballard recommended that I send to you for review.

Originally I planned to have a score composed and although the composer is willing to go ahead with it, I probably will not be able to afford the recording of a sound track, and so will not have the score completed.

However, I have selected some records to go with the film, and if you have dual turn tables and would like to score the film while showing it, the sequence is on the last page of this letter.

As for the nature of the film, it is the simple relating , in cinematic terms, of a fragment from the tragic existance of a modern Narcissus. A verbose program note does not seem to me to be necessary.

Mr. Ballard may have mentioned to you that I am a student at the University of Southern California, majoring in Cinema. While this is true, the film was made independently and has no connection with the Cinema Department of the University.

Should you decide to show it during your third Art in Cinema Series, I shall be very glad to let you have the first public showing of the film. In any case, whether you decide to show it or not, I shall appreciate any comments you may have to make concerning it.

Since I am cutting the negative now, I should appreciate it if you will return the work print to me as soon as possible.

In the past I have made two other films. My first was an 8mm version of Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher," which I completed when I was fifteen years old. In 1945 I embarked on an hour-long original film idea in 8mm Kodachrome. This is still unfinished, and although I hope to complete it, right now such a goal looks rather unobtainable. FRAGMENT OF SEEKING was shot and cut in 1946. I am only now getting to the negative.

Your Art in Cinema Series has been of great interest to me. I hope for the eventual establishment of an experimental cinema movement on an international scale, and such an effort as yours helps toward such a goal. With Maya Deren, I agree that the potentialities of the film medium have as yet only been scratched on the surface. But before any real investigation can be made there must be some sort of release outlet for the creative film. Such a release began to exist during the middle and late twenties, but with the arrival of sound further avant-garde experimentation ceased. It is to be hoped that the shot-in-the-arm given to the cinema by Miss Deren will not lose its strength before an experimental film movement can gather momentum. I feel certain that there will be film makers in Europe who will be able to contribute if and when they can obtain 16mm stock. That the hope for a new experimental film movement depends upon the relatively low cost and uninflammability of 16mm stock goes without saying.

I am the Director of a newly organized film society here in Los Angeles which is bringing all four of the Maya Deren films to local audiences for the first time this coming April 13th. We are attempting a public showing similar to the ones Miss Deren gave at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York. If successful we shall present other such films in the future.

Trusting that I shall hear from you soon, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

Curtis Harrington *[hw]*
Curtis Harrington

The record sequence for FRAGMENT OF SEEKING:

1. The moment the first image comes on the screen after the titles start Side 8 of the Columbia Recording of Shostakovitch's Symphony No. 1 (MM Sequence). Play inward two inches (measuring from the beginning of the grooves).
2. Then segue to the beginning of the Third Movement (Side 4) of the same symphony. Play this, staring in the middle again if necessary, until the man enters the room.
3. At the cut to the man's reflection in the mirror begin Side 2 of the Victor Recording of Prokofieff's Scythian Suite (DM Sequence). Play until the girl begins to kiss the man. The screen should black out in silence.
4. The moment the skull fills the screen begin Side 1 of the Scythian Suite. Let this play until the man looks down at the footprints.
5. Then start Side 6 of the Scythian Suite, about 1 and 1/8 inches from the end of the grooves. That should finish the film in almost perfect timing.

As you can see, the scoring here is really quite simple, and with dual turntables can be timed perfectly. Even without two turntables, since different records are used (except for the last one if the recording is DM Sequence) the music may be accurately timed.

Courtesy of Curtis Harrington.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Program Notes for the 4/4/47 Presentation

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

—THE ART IN CINEMA SOCIETY presents SERIES TWO—

First program, April 4, 1947 Experiments in Fantasy

ESCAPE	Mary Ellen Bute & Ted Nemeth
TARANTELLA	Mary Ellen Bute & Ted Nemeth
WHITE FLOOD	Lionel Berman, W. Fields, Jr., Hans Eisler
LAUREATE	Emlen Etting
UNDERGROUND PRINTER	Tom Bouchard, Lewis Jacobs

—Notes—

Here is the experimental film. Each presentation is an attempt at aesthetic expression with a new medium, a groping in the direction of its development, away from the conventional, tired uses of the commercial film.

An experiment should be judged as such. It is not a finished work. Judgement should be based upon the attitude, the conception and the spirit—the color of the effort. Experiments are often characterized by elements of confusion, trial and error. How much more so, then, with the new medium of film—the technical difficulties of which are more complex than of any other medium. It is necessary to see these films in this light, and not to compare them with the much slicker, technically perfect commercial film.

ESCAPE (American 1939) Designed and photographed by Mary Ellen Bute and Ted Nemeth. Running time approx. 7 minutes. (Loaned through courtesy of Mr. Nemeth.) An abstraction to Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor in which Miss Bute "poses the problem of a triangle trying to 'escape' from behind a grating, a sort of dramatic struggle between two geometric forms (the grating being the combination of two straight lines, vertical and horizontal). She has described this composition as 'an abstract expression of plot, of pure dramatic incident, as a play might be reduced to its essentials.' Here the 'deus ex machina' of any plot finds itself reduced to its fundamentals—struggle and escape—and peace." (Herman G. Weinberg, in A Forward Glance at the Abstract Film)

TARANTELLA (American 1938) Designed and photographed by Mary Ellen Bute and Ted Nemeth. Time, approximately 8 minutes. (Loaned through courtesy of Mr. Nemeth.) A color abstraction composed of animated abstract drawings of straight lines in opposition to curved lines and circles, utilizing the flat plane of the screen as a ground—whereas in the foregoing film the dimension of depth

was added. Only in the diminishing red and white circles is there a suggestion of depth in this interpretation of the nervous, energetic rhythm of the Tarantella.

WHITE FLOOD (American contemporary) Written and edited by Lionel Berman, David Wolff, and Robert Stebbins. Photography by W.O. Fields, Jr. Musical score by Hans Eisler. Time, approx. 20 minutes. (From Brandon Films.) This is a documentary film in which the conception and the treatment result in a work of almost abstract beauty. The elements, the earth, wind, water, sky are perfectly photographed, edited and combined with the superb score by Hans Eisler to create a film poem that, by its artistry, rises far above the geology lesson it is, in fact, presenting.

LAUREATE (American contemporary) Produced, written and directed by Emlen Etting. Time, approx. 25 minutes. (Loaned through the courtesy of Mr. Etting.) Mr. Etting writes: "This film, (like the others I have made) is a film poem wherein the pictures, their sequences and development are used in a poem as opposed to the customary story form. In literature we have the novel, short story, biography, essay, treatise, and poem. In the movies we have almost exclusively the novel and the documentary. There will be, I feel, a definite place in the future for the film poem when people ask more of a film than that it should tell a story. In the film poem, music, the dance, the theatre, and the artist will all work together. The artist has always been obsessed with adding the dimension of time to his pictures, and the movies—possibly in connection with television, afford this opportunity.

"Laureate, made with my wife, Gloria Braggiotti, is woven around the idea of a poet and a symbolic examination of his creative procedure. (Musical accompaniment: Scriabin's Prometheus, Poem of Fire.)"

UNDERGROUND PRINTER (American, circa 1936) Directed by Thomas Bouchard. Photography by Lewis Jacobs. Edited by Jacobs and Elias Katz. With John Bovington as dancer and narrator. Time, approx. 18 minutes. (Loaned by Film Classic Exchange.) A satirical fantasy consisting of a weird dance composition by Bovington involving mimic, pantomime, acting and dancing, with sound effects such as whistling, singing, stream-of-consciousness monologue, etc.

This is one of a group of films made in New York by the so-called "social consciousness" artists of the thirties. The sound track on this print is poor, and many of the spoken words are unintelligible, but enough can be heard to comprehend the drift of the narration (notice the Hitler sequence, and the Japanese military sequence, for example). A film maker in New York in the thirties was fortunate in that he was surrounded by a collection of experimental artists of all kinds—dancers, pantomimists, musicians, actors, etc. Most of them were interested in a welter of political movements as well, so that many of the resulting films were partisan and moral in conception.

Since the film consists of only one figure upon which the spectator must gaze for almost twenty minutes, the cutting, lighting, and camera angles are as remarkable as is the variety of gyrations by Bovington. Several editions, with different editing, have been made. It is possible that this present print is a slightly altered one. (Program note by R. B. Foster)

—Frank Stauffacher

Musical director: Paul Velguth, assisted by Sidney Rawson.

The Art in Cinema Society is sponsored by the San Francisco Museum of Art, the California School of Fine Arts, and Circle Magazine. Series III, now being shown at the University of California, was programmed for the University of California Extension Division by the Art in Cinema Society.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Curtis Harrington from Frank Stauffacher, 4/28/47

April 28, 1947

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Harrington,

I hope you will forgive me for delaying acknowledgement of your film, and for my holding it here for so long. We have been very busy here, and seemed to have had more trouble with our films on Series Two than on the first series. And then too, I was holding FRAGMENT OF SEEKING to show to Jim Broughton and Sidney Peterson since I felt they would be very interested in it—they made THE POTTED PSALM, and while the two films deal with different problems, still they are eager to see any personal expression in cinema. But alas, we could never get together, and so I'm sending your film off today, hoping that we can get it back here in the future.

Your sentiments regarding a new experimental movement in film are exactly the same as ours. That was our idea in forming the Art in Cinema Society. But where are the new experimental films? We have scoured the country and, I believe, have tapped just about every known source; and if there are people making really vital experiments in film—with some exceptions—they are certainly keeping them secret. Our first series here in San Francisco stirred up great enthusiasm; various groups wrote scenarios, bought film, and began taking scenes. But not one of them came through with anything at all, and I'm afraid the movement will peter out. We have managed to build up a huge interested and intelligent audience, but that too will drift apart unless we can find better and more stimulating selections. The fact is, very few of the new things even approach the older "classic" avantgarde works—Man Ray's, Dulac's, Kirsanov's, Ruttmann's, etc. And one would think that today the purely technical advances available to the amateur would create a new stimulus in itself. But it doesn't, and for that reason individual producers like Maya Deren, like yourself, or anyone who actually goes through with a film—should be highly commended.

Now as to FRAGMENT OF SEEKING, anything I can say about it is, of course, entirely my personal reaction, and so please accept it as such. I felt that, as an expression of a problem, it was exceedingly pertinent and very interesting. But as it stands now I feel that it needs considerable editing, particularly in the first half. Even though the pace and the mood is slow, it seems to me that almost every scene could be shortened somewhat. The choice of angles, in several instances, also bothered me; for example, when the principal character walks into the courtyard and comes upon the boy and the girl sitting at a table it is at first very difficult to see that it is a boy and a girl sitting at a table. When he comes upon the blonde leaning against a wall in a medium close up, her profile is confused with rather distracting architectural forms in the background. I always feel that if one is using a fixed focus lens, or a lens set at infinity, it puts a tremendous strain on the actual two dimensional composition of your frame. You have to isolate more, realizing that everything being in focus makes everything encountered by the lens of equal importance. You are no doubt very well aware of this, and perhaps you confused the girl's profile on purpose, for all I know, but remember this is my own personal reaction.

I am at present going through an obsession regarding the <u>variety</u> of imagery any film might contain. This was deeply impressed upon me by one of the films we recently screened—ARSENAL by Alexander Dovjzenko. In spite of its subject matter, or at times its almost mystical and confusing symbolism, still the amazingly varied imagery, so rich and startling—from flat lighting to silhouette, from tremendous close up to very long shots, etc. was something that I had never seen before on the screen and it opened up a whole new realization to me. I realized that the cinema is the most demanding—physically demanding of its onlookers—of any of the arts. In short, its a strain on the eyes. To vary the imagery produces a movement in itself, to say nothing of the movement within the imagery. Even though the pace might be a slow one, this constantly shifting flow and variety of lights, darks, angles, etc. constitute the real essence of the film medium; its actually a problem in abstraction. Miss Deren is well aware of this, and it is <u>particularly</u> obvious in her short STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA.

Again, you are perhaps well aware of all of this even more so than I am. But these are the things I would personally like to see applied to FRAGMENT OF SEEKING. And I am also looking at it somewhat through the eyes of our audience—a particular set of eyes I have unconsciously acquired

during the past year—as I would, being in a sort of editor's position. This in itself, of course, limits my criticism.

At any rate I do wish to thank you for sending me the film, and we would be very happy to show it on Series Three—if we have one. It will take a lot of scraping around to find enough of this form of cinema for another series. In the meanwhile, I wish you the best of luck with your commendable and interesting work.

Sincerely yours

Frank Stauffacher
Art in Cinema

FS/mbb

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Kenneth Anger, 4/29/47 *[hw]*

April 29, 1947

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

I have followed your project of showing experimental films at the San Francisco Museum with great interest, and I wish to commend you for this fine step. I hope it will be possible to continue this program. I understand you are planning a 3rd. film series, depending upon the availability of further experimental films. It is with this in mind that I am sending you this copy of my recently completed film, "Escape Episode." I am a friend of the Whitneys, and I believe Jim has mentioned my work to you.—This film was designed in conjunction with a musical score which has been written for it by the young San Franciscan composer, Eric Vaughn. It is instrumented for woodwinds, trumpet and organ, and is now in preparation for recording.—Of necessity I am sending you this rather battered work-print, as it is impractical to strike a new print before the sound track has been recorded. I thought you would rather view this print now, however, so that you may have the film in mind while planning future programs.—The theme of my film was suggested by a line of Nietzsche's—

"Christianity gave Eros poison to drink—he hardly died thereby, but degenerated into vice."

I would appreciate the return of this print as soon as you have finished reviewing it, as it is needed in our works on the sound recording. I hope you may be able to find a place for my film in your program, in any case I would be very interested in any criticism or evaluation which you might care to make.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Anger

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The San Francisco Museum of Art and The Art in Cinema Society announce the publication of

art in cinema

A catalogue concerning the advantgarde and experimental film, ART IN CINEMA presents the motion-picture as a truly independent art form. Now printing, the work will be published early this Spring. The catalogue was originally conceived as a compilation of program notes for the Series One showing of experimental films at the San Francisco Museum of Art in the fall of 1946 (Series One, and the Society were jointly sponsored by the Museum, The California School of Fine Arts, and Circle Magazine). However, both the interest shown by the audience comprising the Art in Cinema Society and the lack of a single publication devoted exclusively to this manifestation of the cinema, demonstrated the need for amplifying the notes with background material difficult for the layman to obtain. The result has been a catalogue unique in that it constitutes the only publication in English dealing exclusively with the cinema as an independent art form.

The museum hopes that the catalogue will provide a basis for organizing similar series in other cities. Other museums, universities, art schools, film societies and other interested groups will find the information in the catalogue about the sources for the films, the program notes, and the bibliography valuable aids in organizing a non-commercial, non-profit Art In Cinema Series.

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Foreword by DR. GRACE L. McCANN MORLEY

HANS RICHTER: A History of The Avantgarde

LUIS BUNUEL: Notes On The Realization of *Un Chien Andalou*

MAN RAY: Sentiments regarding the Art of The Film

ERICH POMMER: The Beginning of Dr. Caligari

OSKAR FISCHINGER: Essay on a conception of the abstract film

MAYA DEREN: A discussion of the camera as a creative medium

JOHN AND JAMES WHITNEY: Audio-visual music

ELIE FAURE: Excerpts from *The Art of Cineplastics*

GEORGE LEITE: The Creative Arts and The Collective Film

together with complete PROGRAM NOTES and references (including sources) on all films shown on Series One, with additional notes on certain other films not shown on this series, and a bibliography. Profusely illustrated with drawings and photographs. Edited and annotated by Frank Stauffacher, with design and typography by Bezalel Schatz and The Greenwood Press.

The edition will be limited to 2000 copies. Advance orders are being taken: please use the order blank below. The sales price is $2.00 to the public, $1.50 to San Francisco Museum of Art Members, and Art In Cinema Society Members (holders of season tickets—either for the series of five or the series of ten). Please fill out the blank *in full*, and include $.06 tax for each $2.00 order and $.05 tax for each $1.50 order. (Booksellers and distributors may obtain information by writing the Museum directly.)

Art In Cinema Committee: Dr. Grace McCann Morley, Richard Foster, Frank Stauffacher, George Leite, Douglas MacAgy.

Illustration 10. Announcement of the catalogue, *Art in Cinema*. An order blank followed the text.

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Curtis Harrington, 5/6/47

The Experimental Film Society
Curtis Harrington Director
Post Office Box 9731
Los Feliz Station
Los Angeles 27, California

May 6, 1947

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

In preparing for the future programs of the Experimental Film Society we are trying to review some of the available material. I have written Emlen Etting about his cinepoems, and have just received a letter from him stating that two of his films are now at the San Francisco Museum of Art. He advises me to have you send them on to us directly, so that we may review them.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind letter regarding my film. As soon as I have the time, I should like to answer some of your critical remarks. Be sure and let me know if and when you decide to have a Third Series. I am looking forward to seeing Peterson's and Broughton's "The Potted Psalm" when Mr. Ballard shows it on the 14th.

Incidentally, when is the Art in Cinema Catalogue coming out? It's a month and a half overdue, although I imagine the delay has been well warranted by the inclusion of extra material.

I shall look forward to receiving Mr. Etting's two films soon.

And thank you again for everything.

Yours very truly,

Curtis Harrington *[hw]*
Curtis Harrington

P.S. Send Etting's films to me at:

2600 South Hoover
Los Angeles 7, Calif.

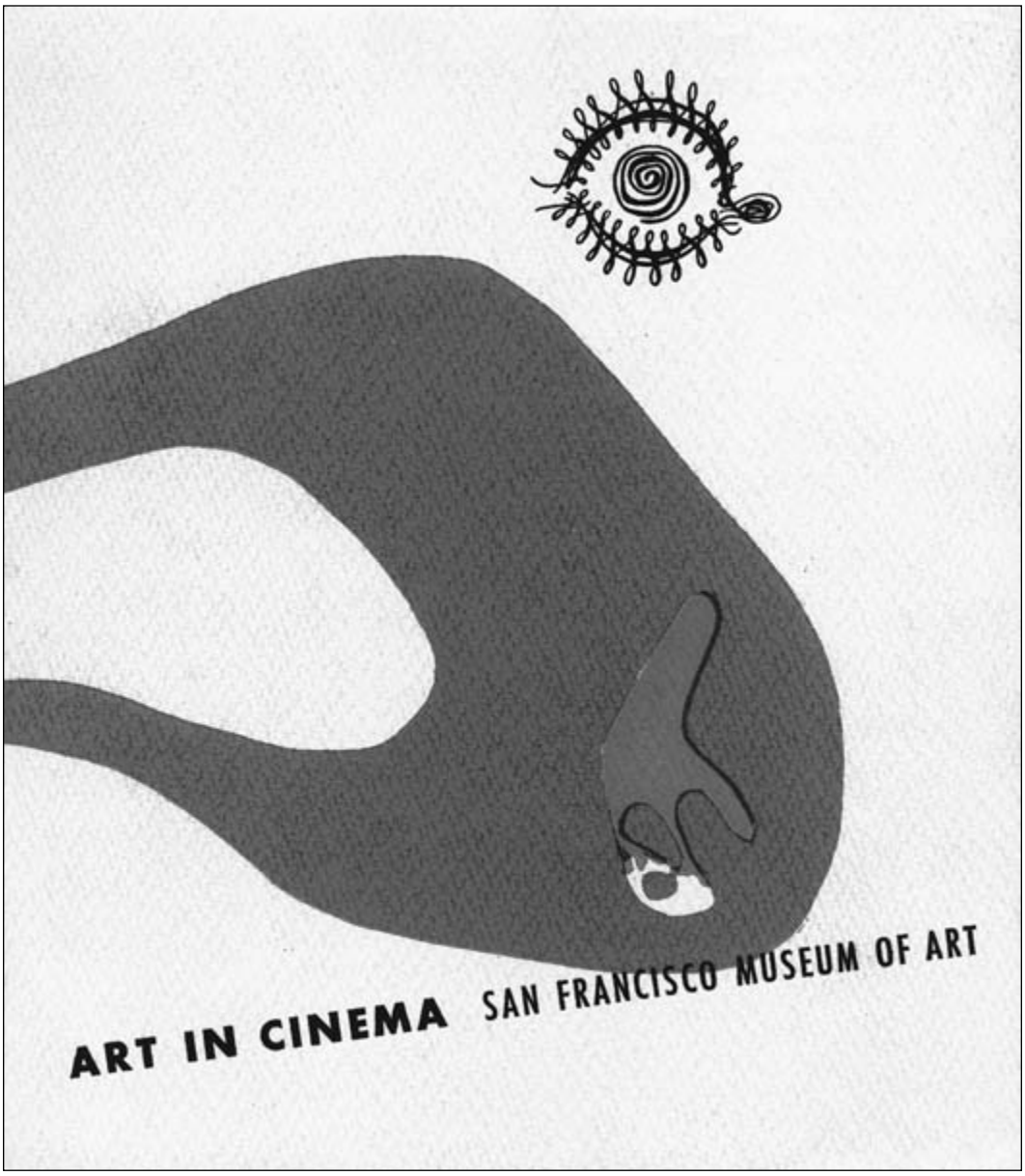
Courtesy of Curtis Harrington.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Facsimile of *Art in Cinema* Catalogue (published late 5/47)

Reprinted by permission of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

A facsimile of the written text of the original Art in Cinema catalogue follows. Due to the exigencies of this volume, it was not practical to include the image inserts; or the front matter; the lists of film sources, illustrations, contributors; or the original index. The pagination of the facsimile corresponds to the original catalogue; gaps mark the missing image inserts.



Catalogue cover.

FOREWORD

The motion picture has now a fifty year history. It has reached full growth as mass entertainment. In technique the cinema has reached maturity—if by technique we mean the resources of the movie camera and the processes necessary for the recording of the illustrations that tell a story or represent reality. But it has only rarely achieved the truly creative art form which it seemed to promise from the beginning to the occasional artists stirred by its possibilities.

The series described and discussed here reviews the high points of the motion picture as an art form. It starts from the crude beginnings in which the very struggle with the medium intensified the creative aspects of the product, and includes a selected sampling of recent experiments of various kinds in the use of the camera as an instrument for art expression.

For some ten years, ever since important films of the past first became available, the San Francisco Museum of Art has explored the motion picture as an art form. Its interest is based on the conviction that the motion picture is, at least potentially, an authentic art of our time. Various types of Museum programs have regularly placed before the public films of artistic, technical, and historical importance. But never previously has the Museum been able to give a film series that so nearly coincides with what it endeavors to do in its exhibitions: keep the public in close and constant contact with the "growing edge" of creative living art. That it has been able to do so now it owes to the interest, knowledge, initiative and industry of a group of young enthusiasts, headed by Richard Foster, Frank Stauffacher and George Leite, who have done the real work of organizing the material, in some cases tracking it down, and in assembling the documentation published here. The Museum believes the series *Art in Cinema* and this publication accompanying it are a useful contribution to the serious study of the motion picture in its creative aspects and possibilities. It appreciates the aid all those interested have given, and it is encouraged by the support from the group formed into the Art in Cinema Society without whom no such ambitious venture would have been possible. It hopes such programs as this will aid in giving recognition to those whose work in cinema is of an authentically creative kind, and in building up a well informed public, exigent and aware, where artistic quality is concerned.

GRACE L. McCANN MORLEY

Catalogue page 1.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

There seems to be a post-war revival of interest in the experimental film. In Paris, Jean Cocteau has finished his surrealist fairy tale, *La Belle et La Bete*. In New York, Hans Richter is putting the finishing touches on *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, with scenarios by Fernand Leger, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Max Ernst and Alexander Calder. In San Francisco, Sydney Peterson and James Broughton have completed their psychological fantasy, *The Potted Psalm*. The films of Maya Deren, made with a simple 16-mm. home movie camera, and at a cost less than that of a week-end in Bermuda, are evoking the praise of critics and public wherever they are shown. With the perfection and availability of inexpensive equipment, more and more independent artists and intelligent amateurs are exploring the infinite resources of the film as a medium of personal expression, trying to catch flashing across the screen that ephemeral moment when light and shadow fuse with movement to release an emotion that could arise from no other art.

Yet historically, the experimental film suffers from a kind of neurosis: It has never been a money-maker; it has never really had anything to do with money—except the rather important matter of its production cost. The history of the motion picture is written almost entirely in terms of financial investment because the perfection of the machine has been costly. So the experimental film has a double neurosis because it exists on the back of the commercial film, and if there had not been the commercial film, there could not have been the Avantgarde. Thus we find it occupying a meagre place in all historical works on the film. But perhaps we have reached a point in cinema's development where, equipment and technique being perfected to a degree, we will find more attention spent upon the inherent capacities of the film as art. Perhaps it is time to reexamine those small brave attempts at artistic experimentation in the past that have so often been called pastiche and frivolous, and accused of being outside the main development of cinema. Perhaps we yet may find, in years to come, that these experiments were more in the main development than we thought.

It is with this in mind that we have attempted to catalogue and bring together for public showing, these restless, hybrid aspects of the film's history. We have by no means as yet exhausted the field. But the very difficulty of seeking out the sources, and here and there

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uncovering some fine unknown fragment, will be justified if the reasonably large body of interested people—who we expect does exist—can examine these films for themselves.

Since an interest in a non-commercial venture needs a non-commercial center for its expression, the logical center in San Francisco is the San Francisco Museum of Art. With the help of the Museum staff and the co-sponsors, Mr. Douglas MacAgy of the California School of Fine Arts and George Leite, publisher and editor of Circle Magazine, an interested and critical audience has been assembled for this series. All proceeds beyond basic expenses have been allocated to those artists currently working in this form of cinema who have loaned their films or who have otherwise helped to make the series a success. Through the medium of the Art in Cinema Society, subsequent series of this kind will be arranged for showings at the Museum and elsewhere in the San Francisco area.

RICHARD FOSTER
FRANK STAUFFACHER

San Francisco, October 1946

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INTRODUCTION
The Red Herring and the Diamond-backed Terrapin

The red herring, as Michael Fraenkel would say, is death.

Let no one imagine that the showing of these films will bring about a revolution in the cinema world. Nothing can accomplish such a miracle except a complete change in our way of life. Though we have crossed the threshold of a technological era whose possibilities are beyond all prediction, the cinema shows no startling signs of improvement. From the technical standpoint we are supposed to produce the best pictures in the world. Technically speaking, we are the master race. But art and technics are not twins. As technic advances art languishes. In the middle of the gulf of nothingness the red herring, which is always death, performs *le grand ecart*.

Many of the films, shown now for the first time to an American audience, were made a generation or two ago. The best among them were made with little money and meagre equipment. Most of them are now classics, having passed the test of time without benefit of box office. For this reason, and solely for this reason, we refer to them now and henceforth as diamond-backed terrapin.

Of what are these young films dreaming? Do they dream with mirrored surfaces reflecting only the torpor of life? Is art merely the reflection of life? At what level does art begin to transmogrify life? An eastern myth has it that the universe is supported on the back of a huge tortoise. It says nothing about the tortoise performing acrobatic stunts. The tortoise simply swims in the wake of creation. In similar fashion life may be said to sustain art. Where we seek reflection only, there we find the red herring.

The experimental film, called such only because it dares to lie to the mirror, is not the ultimate in film art. It is only a tentative, faltering step in the direction of the unexplored. Thus far the medium of the film has scarcely been penetrated. It is still an uncharted ocean bounded by we know not what strange shores. Undoubtedly there exists a world, cinematic in texture and contour, as marvelous and inexhaustible as any known to the poet or mystic. It is a world which, once discovered, will alter the very atmosphere we breathe. Its cardinal element is fantasy. It manifests itself whenever the imagination liberates itself from the thralls of the intellect.

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The danger of fantasy is that it nourishes the dream. This is also its virtue, since dream and symbol are the very pillars of life. Awake we swim in the dead sea, our movements regulated by fear and anxiety. Once the lid is closed the eye opens on a world in which we are at home, because we are at last free. This freedom expresses itself through endless metamorphoses. How static then appears the waking world! What we regarded as life assumes the attributes of death. Over every semblance of rigidity the red herring smears its slimy trail. The familiar everyday world becomes the void in which our clumsy creations are rooted like crumbling monuments of the past.

On whose back do we move so effortlessly in dream? Whence these boreal effects unregistered by any camera? On what mysterious screen float these swarms of undirected images? Or is there a silent and invisible director? And who collaborates with whom?

We ask these questions not in order to provoke the suppressive logic of the rational mind, which demands an answer to every question, but to stimulate quest. We ask in order to invoke more difficult images, and to meet them not with words but with action. The exploration of the cinematic world is fraught with even greater consequences than the exploration of the physical world. In the depths of that vast ocean which Columbus traversed are hidden mysteries greater than any imagined by those who vainly tried to imagine the New World which he discovered. In the depths of matter lie incalculable airy realms unsuspected by the devotees of the spirit world. So too, in this world which with our waking eyes we rigidly take for granted, there are possibilities of metamorphosis, from the most demonic to the sublime, which only the play of fantasy can bring to light. And the cinema, of all the arts, possesses the means for exploiting this element of fantasy to the utmost limit. On the screen we can sit inside and outside ourselves at the same time. The veil between dream and reality, when suffused with light, is capable of yielding the modulations of the spirit which animates all life.

Exhausted by longing, the spirit of man strives perpetually to surrender its burden through wonder. The organ of the soul is the eye which, having beheld its creation, sees the significance of that which it originally longed to behold. A third eye renders back the wonder which surrounds the meaning of creation. Only the blind can express true longing, just as the seer can express only ecstasy. Entering the realm of vision we move with the fleet harmony of angels. Wonder expands the inner orb, making it wax like a golden moon. At the full the darkest recesses of the soul are illumined. It is then we sustain, with our breath merely, the changeless universe in which form and image obey the ceaseless logic of dream.

HENRY MILLER
Big Sur, California

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HANS RICHTER: A History of the Avantgarde

In the ten years between '21 and '31 there developed an independent artistic movement in cinematography. This movement was called Avantgarde. It was the only independent artistic movement in the history of cinematography until today. This art movement in film was parallel to such movements in plastic art as Expressionism, Futurism, Cubism and Dadaism. It was non-commercial, non-representational, but international. It included artists from eleven countries; Australia, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, U.S.S.R., and the United States.

THE GENERAL POST-WAR SITUATION IN EUROPE WHICH CREATED THE AVANTGARDE FILM

1. *Political and Economic Unrest*

Europe after the first war was taut with economic, social, political and cultural unrest. Revolutions all over the Continent had loosened traditions and opened the mind for new things. It was a period of readjustment to the new sets of standards which came as a consequence of the war; a short but creative interval between two big wars, comparable to the time of Pericles which preceded the destruction of Greece.

The economic situation changed every day. Inflations were expanding and exploding all throughout Europe and in their wake came a rather hectic prosperity, which lasted until the end of 1929. Everybody lived to the hilt. New ideas were accepted, even desired.

2. *The Opposition Against Conventional Film Routine*

The Cinema after the first world war made great strides technically, but psychologically and artistically it did not keep pace with the

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times. The French writers, Canudo (of Italian descendants) and Delluc, later Epstein and Moussinac, opposed the conventional routine of the commercial film; the "canned" theatre. They tried to create an esthetic standard for the film. It was the time of the discovery of the "soul of the camera." They realized that the film could not depend exclusively on the actor, the novel and the play, and that in order to develop further it had to create its own plastic expression. Therefore it was necessary to understand the nature of the lenses, the artistic possibilities of the emulsion, the variations in speed which could lead to a new creative expression, the rhythm; the limitations and possibilities of the mechanic—the spirit of the machine. Delluc's "Photogeny" became a measure for good and bad in film.

Clubs (Cine Club de France, 1926), Leagues (Film League in Holland, 1926, and in Germany, 1930), Film Societies (England, 1926), Public Organizations all over Europe were founded and flourished. They proved that there was an audience for a different type of film from those which the film companies were delivering. The result was that the new little Playhouses, which sprang up all over the continent, concentrated their energies on Avantgarde productions. The first Avantgarde theatre in Europe was a part of an old monastery of the Ursuline order in the Latin Quarter of Paris, which Armand Tallier rented for less than twenty dollars a year. In 1925 he opened the "Cinema des Ursulines." "Cinema Latin," "Studio 28," and others soon followed. Similar theatres opened in Holland ("Uitkyk"), Germany ("Kamera"), Switzerland, Poland, Belgium and finally all over Europe. These Playhouses meant business for their owners and for the Avantgarde film producers.

3. *The Artistic Climate of Europe*

Cubism, Expressionism, Dadaism and Abstract Art characterized at this time the art movements in Europe. The more self-confident Modern Art became, the more it wanted to influence the form of the other plastic arts with its new plastic experience. Dance and Theatre were relatively easily inspired, as they were traditionally accustomed to artistic changes, but it was quite another thing to influence the youngest art: film. In the first place film was strictly technically conditioned, still in its first experimental stage and altogether too much occupied by its own particular technical problems. In the second place it had no artistic tradition whatever. However, it was inevitable that, sooner or later, a territory of such tremendous plastic possibilities as the

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film would be "infected" by these new expressions. For the film was as much a product of our times as modern art.

The actual approach came from two different sides of modern art: at first from Abstract Art and then from Cubism. The process of dissolution of the natural object in Cubism led to the free form: the form liberated from its photographic appearance. (The art growing out of this historical step was called "abstract art"—an art which no longer had a natural object.)

Even after the Cubists had dissolved the limitations of the object they kept their relationship to it. (However this relationship was only the exterior, not the interior characteristics of Cubism.) It should also be realized that Cubism did not signify only the dissolution of the object, this was an accidental liberation resulting from a still stronger impulse. The real historical impulse, the one which forced the Cubist painters out of the beautiful organical world of Impressionism, into a world of architectonic forms, came from the vision of a style whose elements had still to be found. The individualistic viewpoint of Impressionism: "Nature Interpreted by Temperament," was now replaced by the objective research for the principles of this style. They no longer studied the natural appearance of the object, its flair, its atmosphere, instead they sought for its "plastic value," for the very elements responsible for its creation. (Cezanne saw that every form in nature is based upon an elementary form as sphere, oval, square, etc.) In this direction went the Cubists and in their footsteps followed "Abstract Art," but eventually it developed a more unconditioned form of expression than Cubism had discovered.

The general tendency of Abstract Art was to overcome pure individualistic emotional expression and to find instead the way for the expression of universal feeling. The uncontrolled richness of (abstract) forms which had so abruptly beaten down upon the painters had to be controlled, as the forms alone no longer held any special significance when separated from their conventional background. Thus the actual pass-word of Abstract Art became elimination of the uncontrolled, creation of norms, discipline and control of the whole. The further this elimination went, the simpler became the relationship of the rest of the forms.

The controlled relationship of forms to others contained potentially already an approach to films, in picture sequences (variations). In Viking Eggeling's studies of an "Orchestration of the Line,"

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sequences (on isolated canvases or sheets of paper) already contained latently the medium: time. In 1919 they found their adequate form in Scroll paintings (Viking Eggeling and Hans Richter, 1919-1920) which united sequences of variations in one long scroll. It became only a matter of consequence and artistic logic to take the next step into real movement!

These static sequences of dynamic themes were put into film in 1921 (Eggeling's "Diagonal Symphony", and Richter's "Rhythm 21"). It was the first attempt to create relationship between plastic forms in movement. The other line was also started by a modern painter: Fernand Leger.

Leger was one of the Cubists of the first hour. Contrary to Delaunay, who finally left the "object" for good, Leger kept to the object and seldom risked departure from the solid world of existent things. Here he tried to solve in his way the problem of the style, a style which would encompass the objective reality containing the experience of our times. "The war had thrust me, as a soldier, into the heart of a mechanical atmosphere. In this atmosphere I discovered the beauty of the fragment. I sensed a *new* reality in the detail of a machine, in the common object. I tried to find the plastic value of these fragments of our modern life. I rediscovered them on the Screen in the close-ups of objects, which impressed and influenced me. However, I felt that one could make their expression much stronger. In 1923 I decided to 'frame' the beauty of this undiscovered world in the film. In this medium I worked as I had done before in painting. To create the rhythm of common objects in space and time, to present them in their plastic beauty, this seemed to me worthwhile. This was the origin of my *Ballet Mecanique*."

4. *The Influence of New Technique and New Art on the Public*

From another side there came a loosening of the conventional way. The vision of every generation is different from the foregoing one, but the phenomenal growth of Mechanical and Energetical technique during the last fifty years made us see things our grandfathers never dreamed about. Gradually more and more people became aware that machines and techniques did not mean only rationalistic things; production and comfort; but their speed, their rhythm, their pattern added a new appeal to life, a new beauty.

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1921

VIKING EGGELING, *painter*

Born in Lund, Sweden, 1880. Died May 19th, 1925.

Diagonal Symphony — Orchestration of abstract forms, 1921. Silent short.

HANS RICHTER, *painter*

Born in Berlin, Germany, 1888. Lives in New York.

Rhythm 21 — Orchestration of abstract forms, 1921. Silent short.

Rhythm 23 and 25—Silent—Orchestration of abstract forms.

Film Study 1926—Abstract forms related to and transformed in objects. Silent short.

Inflation 1927—First film essay (about the inflation in Germany. Produced for Ufa as an introduction to *The Lady With the Mask).* Silent short.

Ghosts Before Noon 1927-28 — Burlesque of revolting objects. Silent, but later made as a sound short with a score by Paul Hindemith.

Race Symphony 1928—Impressionistic sequence about a horse race (Documentary produced for Maxim-Emelka, Berlin, as an introduced for *Ariadne in Hoppegarten).* Silent short.

Everything Revolves 1929—Burlesque of a Fair. Sound — 3 reels. Richter continued as a documentary and experimental film producer; *From Lightning to Television—The Conquest of the Sky—Stock Exchange,* etc.

Dreams That Money Can Buy 1944-46—Produced for Art of This Century Films Inc. by Hans Richter in cooperation with Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Fernand Leger and Man Ray. Ten reels, with original score by Darius Milhaud, John Cage, Paul Bowles, Edgar Verese, etc. (See page 89.)

1922

WALTHER RUTTMANN, *painter*

Born about 1890 in Germany. Died 1941 on the German front in Russia.

Opus 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.—Improvisations with abstract forms. 1922-25, silent.

Berlin—Impressionist symphony of a great city. Silent feature, with a score by Edmund Meisel.

Weekend 1928 — Associations with sound heard on a weekend.

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Sound Track only. No picture. Short.
Sounding Waves 1928—Symphony of the power of radio. Sound feature.
Melody of the World 1929—Impressionistic symphony about a trip around the world. Sound feature.
Ruttman continued as a documentary film producer: *Steel*—"A small film of a big city." *Hamburg*, etc.

1923
RENE CLAIR, *started as a writer*
Born about 1900 in Paris, France. Lives in Paris.
Paris qui Dort 1923—Comical film using slow motion and high speed in streets of Paris. Silent—4 reels.
Entr'acte 1924—(In collaboration with the painters Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia.) Fantastic story of a funeral in different rhythms. Silent—2 reels.
The Italian Straw Hat 1928-29—Story of a straw hat and a wedding. Silent feature.
Clair continued as a feature film producer: *Sons les Toits de Paris —Le Million—A Nous la Liberte—Ghost Goes West—I Married a Witch*, etc.

1923-'24
FERNAND LEGER, *painter*
Born in Argentan, France, 1881, lives in New York. *Ballet Mecanique* 1924—Rhythmical play of objects without story. Silent, 2 reels.

1924
CLAUDE AUTANT LARRA, *writer*
Born about 1890 in France. Lives in France.
Faits Divers 1924—Drama in close-ups. Silent short.
How to Make a Fire (after Jack London) 28/29. Experiment using a large film, 45 mm., divided into 3 pictures, showing 3 scenes simultaneously. Two reels.

1925
JEAN RENOIR, *started as an actor*
Born 1894 in France. Lives in Hollywood.

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La fille de l eau 1925—Story film using the artistic expressions of the camera. Silent feature.

Nana 1926—Interpretation of Zola's book with Katherine Hessling. Silent feature.

The Girl with the Matches—Silent feature.

Renoir continued as a producer of feature films: *Grand Illusion—La Marseillaise—La Regle du Jeu,* etc.

HENRI CHÓMETTE, *writer* (brother of Rene Clair)

Born about 1890 in Paris, France. Died about 1938.

Crystals 1925—Rhythmical play of the beauty of crystal reflections. Five minutes of pure cinema. Silent short.

Reflections and Speeds—(Chomette-Beaumont) Rhythms of Paris. Silent—2-3 reels.

1926

ALBERTO CAVALCANTI, *started as an architect painter*

Born in Brazil, 1897, now lives in London.

P'tite Lily 1926—Film visualizing a Parisian folk song. (Burlesque with unhappy ending). Silent, later, in 1929, a sound film with score of Darius Milhaud.

Rien que les Heures 26/27—Dramatic cross section of 24 hours in Paris. Silent feature.

En Rade 1928—Sentimental document of a harbor. Silent feature.

Cavalcanti continued as a documentary film producer for the General Post Office and the B.T.O., London: *Night Mail—Spring Offensive—Squadron 992,* etc.

MAN RAY, *painter, photographer*

Born in 1890 in Philadelphia, Pa. Lives in Hollywood.

Le Retour a la Raison 1923—First film, made overnight for a Dada soiree. Silent, one reel.

Emak Bakia 1926—Surrealistic sequence of associations. Rhythms with objects. Silent, one reel.

L'Etoile de Mer 1928—Translation into visual imagery of a love poem by Robert Desnos. Silent, one reel.

Les Mysteres du Chateau du De 1929—Surrealist visit to an elegant villa. Silent, one reel.

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1927

MARCEL DUCHAMP, *painter*

Born 1887 in Blainville, France. Lives in New York.

Anaemic Cinema 1927—Compositions of moving spirals composed together with spiralic poetic sentences. Silent short.

JORIS IVENS, *started as a photographer*

Born 1898 in Holland. Lives in New York.

The Bridge 1927—Rhythmical . . . Documentary, about the construction of the Maass bridge in Rotterdam. Silent, 2 reels.

Rain 1928-29 — Documentary film made in collaboration with Mannus Francken (Dutch) Poetical impressions of rain in Amsterdam. Two reels—silent.

Branding 1929 — Documentary film made in collaboration with Mannus Francken. Poetical film about the waves thundering against the Dutch coast. Silent short.

Zuydersee 1927-1933—Dramatic picture of the drying of part of the North Sea and its social failure. Silent feature, later sound film with score of Hans Eisler.

Ivens continued as a director of documentary films: *Borinage,* in collaboration with Henri Storck, Brussels—*Spanish Earth—400,000,000—The Power and the Land,* etc.

1928

GERMAINE DULAC

Born about 1890 in France. Died in 1942 in France.

The Smiling Madame Beudet 1922 — A psychological study of domestic conflicts. Silent feature.

The Seashell and the Clergyman 1928—A psychoanalytical film about the inferiority complexes of a clergyman. Silent feature.

Arabesque 1930-31—Several abstract poems of forms. Silent.

Germaine Dulac continued as a newsreel director for "France Actualitees."

EUGENE DESLAW

Born about 1890 in Belgium.

The March of the Machines—Dramatic poem of the rhythm of machines. Silent short. 1928.

Electric Night—Poem of the light. Silent short.

Montparnasse—Impressions of a Paris quarter. Silent short.

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LEN LYE, *started as a painter*

Born in 1901 in New Zealand.

Abstraction (?) 1928—Dramatic play of abstract, organical form. Silent short.

Color Box 1935 and *Rainbow Dances* 1936—Artistic propaganda films in color, hand painted for the General Post Office in England. Short.

Lambeth Walk 1941—Hand-painted rhythmical abstract musical short.

Under the pressure of public interest created by the Film Leagues, some of the most important Dutch newspapers accepted members of the Avantgarde organization as critics of their papers. Thus Holland built up one of the most advanced and independent circles of film critics in the world. These critics, educated in the modern art of film, had grown up and fought for new forms of expression. Modern Art became a symbol of emancipation from conventional limitations, a fundamental rebirth which everybody anticipated after the years of disruption and isolation.

1929

International Film Congress of the independent film (Avantgarde) met in La Sarras, Switzerland, in August in the old castle of Mme. de Mandrot. There were delegations from 14 countries. Eisenstein and his collaborators were present too.

RALPH STEINER, *painter*

Born 1899 in Cleveland, Ohio. Lives in New York.

H_2O 1929—Rhythms and textures of water. Silent short.

JEAN VIGO, *writer*

Born about 1905 in France. Died in 1934.

A Propos de Nice 1929—In collaboration with Boris Kauffmann—Social, critical observation of snobbery and poverty in Nice. Documentary style. Silent, 2-3 reels.

L'Atalante 1934—Fantastic, dramatic story of a trailer. Sound feature.

Zero de Conduite 1935—Realistic critical picture about life and character of children. Children seen through the eyes of children. Sound feature.

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LACOMBE, *student of Rene Clair*

Born in 1900 in France. Lives in France.

La Zone 1929—Document about a market in the suburbs of Paris. Two-three reels.

Lacombe continued as a documentary film producer.

LUIS BUNUEL, *writer*

Born in 1900 in Spain. Lives in Hollywood.

Un Chien Andalou 1929—Surrealistic picture (without any dog). Silent, 2 reels.

L' Age d' Or 1930—First surrealist long feature film. Violent realistic story of sex and inhibitions. Sound. Score, Bunuel.

Land Without Bread 1932—Dramatic documentary about disastrous living and social conditions in Spain. Sound feature.

KENNETH MacPHERSON, *writer*

Born about 1900 in England. Lives in New York.

Foothills 1929 — Psychoanalytical film about a sophisticated woman who came to live in a small village. Silent feature.

Monkey's Moon 1930—Fantasy of escaping monkeys. Silent, 1 reel.

Borderline 1931—Psychoanalytical film about the love between a negro and a white woman; with Paul Robeson. Silent feature.

Publisher of "Close-up"—British progressive film magazine.

HERMAN G. WEINBERG, *writer*

Born 1908, New York.

City Symphony 1929—Impressions of New York. Silent, 1 reel.

Autumn Fire 1930—Lyrical film poem. Romantic love story of separated loves told in a series of natural symbols—clouds, trees, water, etc.—expressing moods.

1930

JEAN COCTEAU, *poet and painter*

Born about 1895 in France. Lives in Paris.

The Blood of a Poet 1930—Surrealistic feature film in episodes, observing the life of the author. Sound.

OSKAR FISCHINGER, *started as a painter.*

Born about 1900 in Germany. Lives in Hollywood. Made his first abstract attempt in Ruttman's film, *Melody of the World* 1929. Film consists of different abstract compositions as illustrations of classical and modern music. All sound films.

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Studies No. 1 to 12 — 1928-30. Black and white shorts.

Coloratura 1931—Black and white short.

Composition in Blue 1933—Color abstract to *The Merry Wives of Winsor,* by Nicolay. Short.

Circle 1933—Color abstract to music by Wagner. Short.

Allegretto 1936—Color short.

Optical Poem 1937—Made for MGM. Sound short to Liszt's second Hungarian Rhapsody. In technicolor.

An American March 1939—A sound short in technicolor.

FRANCIS BRUGRIERE, *painter*

Born about 1890. Belgian.

Light Rhythms 1930—Film using three-dimensional abstract forms cut in paper. Movements created by moving the light, not the objects. Sound short.

The International Film Congress of the Independent Film (Avantgarde) met in Brussels in November. The Avantgarde as a purely artistic movement had passed its climax and was on its way to concentrating on the social and political film, mainly in documentary form.

The Avantgarde Expires as an Independent Film Movement.

1931 marked the end of the Avantgarde because of the following reasons:

1. The political situation in Europe grew tenser every month and the Avantgarde poetry no longer seemed to be suitable. This the artist felt as well as the public. (Congress-Brussels, 1930.)
2. The Avantgarde artists no longer wanted to make their films as an artistic experiment but as a full time job to deal with the social, political and human ideas of their time.
3. The dawn of the sound film absorbed public interests, and the enormous expenses of the sound recording definitely cut down any independent individual production. Most of the Avantgarde producers found their way into the documentary film. In this type of film creative plastic expression might be of special advantage, once in a while, and because, unlike the feature films, documentary film is not subordinated to the actor.

Practical Results of the Avantgarde Film Work

The influence the Avantgarde exercised upon feature film production in Europe went through different channels:

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1. Part of the Avantgarde artists became engaged either temporarily or permanently in the film industry.
2. A small number of them specialized in detail work (abstract scenes in feature films, or advertising).
3. However, most of the artistic experiences and forms were taken over by the big industries who transformed the spontaneous experiences of the Avantgarde into solid production schemes.

During the ten years of its development the conditions which had led to the Avantgarde film movement all changed, only one remained: Modern Art. The problem of artistic articulation in the medium of film is not yet solved. The same dream of new beauty which inspired the generation of artists from 1921 to 1931 inspires artists today. There is no Avantgarde film movement any more but as long as Modern Art exists, the problems of the experimental film will remain.

1936

MARY ELLEN BUTE

Born 1909 in Houston, Texas, and

THEODORE NEMETH, *painter*

Born 1900 in Cambridge, Mass. Live in New York.

Rhythm in Light 1936—Abstract rhythm. Sound short.

Synchrony No. 2 1936—Abstract rhythm. Sound short.

Parabola 1938 (with Rutherford Boyd)—Abstract rhythm. Sound short.

Escape 1940 — Dramatic scene with geometric figures. Sound short. Color.

Tarantella 1941—Abstract film in color.

Spools Sport 1941 — Abstract film with organic forms. Sound. Color.

1938

DOUGLASS CROCKWELL, *painter*

Born United States. Lives in Glen Falls, New York.

Fantasmagoria I 1938—*II* '39—*III* '40—*Glen Falls Sequence* — Three dimensional organic forms, glass effects. Shorts.

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1939

GLORIA AND EMLEN ETTING, *painters*

Born in 1904 in Philadelphia, Pa. Live in Haverford, Pa.

Laureate, A Film Poem 1939—Silent. Color, 2-3 reels.

NORMAN MacLAREN, *student of Len Lye*

Born about 1910 in Scotland. Lives in Ottawa, Canada.

Loops 1939 — Abstract hand colored, hand drawn film. Sound short.

Stars and Stripes 1940—Color phantasy about the American Flag. Sound short.

MacLaren works for the Canadian National Film Board, making abstract propaganda films and musical shorts.

1940

DWINELL GRANT, *painter*

Born in Springfield, Ohio, in 1912. Lives in New York.

Themis, 1940—Non-object study in color. Silent short.

Contrathemis 1941—Two dimensional experience in thematic development. Color. Silent short.

Three Dimensional Experiments 1945—Color. Silent.

MYLON MERIAM, *painter*

Born in Brooklyn, New York, about 1900. Lives in Washington.

Abstract films: Point focus photography. 1941/42.

1944-46

MAYA DEREN — Born America, lives in New York.

Meshes of the Afternoon 1943—In collaboration with Alexander Hammid. A film dealing with a subconscious experience. Silent, one reel.

At Land 1944—A film in the nature of an inverted Odyssey.

A Study in Choreography for Camera 1945—With Tally Beatty. The dancer in space created by the camera. Silent short.

Ritual in Transfigured Time 1945—A film ritual that undertakes to create its own space, time and reality.

JOHN AND JAMES WHITNEY, *technician and painter*

Born America. Live in Hollywood.

Film Exercises 1 to 5. 1943-45—Abstract forms complemented by sound produced on the sound track synthetically. Experiments in audio-visual music.

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SYDNEY PETERSON, *painter, photographer,* and
JAMES BROUGHTON, *playwright.* Both live in San Francisco.
The Potted Psalm 1946—A cinematic experiment in exploring a psychological case.

In the meantime, complimentary to the Avantgarde Movement, there had been developed another medium which dealt with the some esthetic problem. Rosinee, Russian born, demonstrated in about 1925 in Berlin, and later on in Paris, an instrument with which colors and forms could be freely and voluntarily moved and changed. It was used in some Playhouses regularly as Entr'actes and showed sequences of abstract forms in pure colors.

Lazlo in London experimented about the same time with his "color piano" for the same purpose, and so did Thomas Wilfred in the United States. Wilfred's "color organ" became the most perfect instrument of this kind. The results of these efforts are fascinating, actually more from the technical than from the artistic standpoint. However they have practically the same unlimited possibilities for a painter as a piano has for the pianist. There is no doubt that such free articulation and composition of forms and colors opens up wider fields for the creative imagination. Undoubtedly in the coming time of television there will be a chance of using such machines and their use may develop their artistic expression, if artists are going to play them.

The Avantgarde Movement may be historically regarded as an outgrowth of Modern Art, even if it belongs technically to the film. For the latter it has played the very necessary role of an experimental laboratory. This is the only time that the film has had an artistic laboratory. Today it has none. Needless to say experimentation leads to a new unfolding of techniques, to new and more comprehensive fields of expression and style. To keep in stride with the swift pace of these times, to be vitalized and revitalized by the exciting psychological and physical developments of our century, it is essential that the film have a field in which the struggle toward a more complete fulfillment of its talents may be carried on. Free artistic experiment has had no place in the film production of today. It should have.

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ELIE FAURE: The Art of Cineplastics

(Editor's Note: Although most of the material in this booklet has been prepared exclusively for it, the following selection is one important exception. It is composed of excerpts from a much longer work, the first intelligent critical survey of cinematic esthetics, a series of essays by Elie Faure which appeared in English in the pages of "The Freeman" (New York) 1918-19, and were republished in 1923 by The Four Seas Press of Boston under the title "The Art of Cineplastics," here reprinted by permission of Bruce Humphries, Inc., Boston. Their interest lies in the fact that the great historian who understood so profoundly the spirit that animates all art, recognized the esthetic possibilities of the cinema at a time when it was not only suffering its most harsh growing pains, but from the contempt of most serious thinkers, as well.)

I remember the unexpected emotions I received, seven or eight years before the war, from certain films the scenarios of which, as it happened, were of incredible silliness. The revelation of what the cinema of the future can be came to me one day; I retain an exact memory of it, of the commotion that I experienced when I observed in a flash, the magnificence there was in the relationship of a piece of black clothing to the grey wall of an inn. From that moment I paid no more attention to the martyrdom of the poor woman who was condemned, in order to save her husband from dishonor, to give herself to the lascivious banker who had previously murdered her mother and debauched her child. I discovered with increasing astonishment, that, thanks to the tone-relations that were transforming the film for me in a system of colors scaling from white to black and ceaselessly commingled, moving, changing on the surface and in the

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depths of the screen, I was witnessing a sudden coming to life, a descent into that host of personages whom I had already seen — motionless — on the canvases of Greco, Frans Hals, Rembrandt, Velazquez, Vermeer, Courbet, Manet. I do not set these names down at random, the last two especially. They are those the cinema suggested to me from the first.

Later, as the medium of the screen was perfected from day to day, as my eye became accustomed to these strange works, other memories associated themselves with the earlier ones, till I no longer needed to appeal to my memory and invoke familiar paintings in order to justify the new plastic impressions that I got at the cinema. Their elements, their complexity which varies and winds in a continuous movement, the constantly unexpected things imposed on the work by its mobile composition, ceaselessly renewed, ceaselessly broken and remade, fading away and reviving and breaking down, monumental for one flashing instant, impressionistic the second following—all this constitutes a phenomenon too radically new for us even to dream of classing it with painting, or with sculpture, or with the dance, least of all with the modern theatre. It is an unknown art that is beginning. . . .

I would point out the immense resources which, independent of the acting of the cinemimics, are beginning to be drawn from their multiple and incessantly modified relationships with the surroundings, the landscape, the calm, the fury, and the caprice of the elements, from natural or artificial lighting, from the prodigiously complex and shaded play of values, from precipitate or retarded movements, such as the slow movements of those galloping horses which seem to be made of living bronze, or those running dogs whose muscular contractions recall the undulations of reptiles. I would point out too, the profound universe of the microscopic infinite, and perhaps—tomorrow—of the telescopic infinite, the undreamed of dance of atoms and stars, the shadows under the sea as they begin to be shot with light. I would point out the majestic unity of masses in movement that all this accentuates without insistence, as if it were playing with the grandiose problem that Masaccio, Leonardo, Rembrandt were never quite able to solve . . . I could never come to the end of it. Shakespeare was once a formless embryo in the narrow shadows of the womb of a good dame of Stratford.

That the starting-point of the art of the moving picture is in plastics,

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seems to me to be beyond all doubt. To whatever form of expression, as yet scarcely suspected, it may lead us, it is by volumes, arabesques, gestures, attitudes, relationships, associations, contrasts and passages of tones—the whole animated and insensibly modified from one fraction of a second to another—that it will impress our sensibility and act on our intelligence by the intermediation of our eyes. Art, I have called it, not science.

I am not a prophet, I can not tell what will have become in a hundred years of the admirable creations of the imagination of a being, a cinemimic, who, alone among living things, has the privilege of knowing that though his destiny is without hope, he is yet the only being to live and think as if he had the power to take to himself eternity. Yet it seems to me that I already see what the art of the cinemimic may presume to become if, instead of permitting itself to be dragged by theatrical processes through a desolating sentimental fiction, it is able to concentrate itself on plastic processes, around a sensuous and passionate action in which we can all recognize our own personal virtues.

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MAN RAY*

The world may be roughly divided into two parts, one part that moves and one part that does not move. This is aside from any question of an animate or inanimate world, for even in these two classes one may make a division of a moving world and a non-moving world. Of course scientists tell us that even the most inert mass of clay is composed of atoms and molecules that are continually whirling and colliding in a frenzy of animation. And I have told scientists that many elements whose motion is visible to the naked eye, elements that obviously move at terrific speed, are quite stationary—do not seem to be getting anywhere.

It is necessary that I call attention to this aspect of things, because we are looking at moving pictures in an art gallery primarily dedicated to the presentation of static works of art. You know as well as I do that to look at paintings and sculptures, one must move about. We cannot sit in a comfortable chair and watch the panorama pass by, as in the projection of films. Therefore, nature always manages to create an even balance. When art stands still, one must move about. When art moves, one may remain motionless.

Many people, intellectuals too, have decided that the dynamic art is the evolution of all art, that the addition of movement to an expressive medium is a contribution that will supersede all previous forms. To me this seems a rather superficial judgment, and, I suspect, a selfish one. They like their comfort too much. I could defend the older static arts by saying that since it makes *you* move about, that since *you* are put into a dynamic position, it is a superior art. However, I must confess that I have never been wholeheartedly of that opinion either.

Here is my real attitude, arrived at after years of practice in both

*Talk by Man Ray at a film showing October 15, 1943
American Contemporary Gallery, Hollywood

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mediums, static and dynamic: I have never been a purist, as existed first in the days of the silent film. I have always demanded a sound accompaniment to round out the effect of silent pictures. I made attempts at three-dimensional relief, color, and even envisaged the possibilities of smell, and heat and cold. And the attainment of ultimate realism had a definite plan behind it: to create such an atmosphere of reality that it would seriously compete with everyday life; that at a given moment the spectator would imagine himself back in the street; in fact he would desire to rush out and breathe the pure air of the outside, live his own life, be the leading actor and solve his own dramatic problems. In that way he would realize a long cherished dream of becoming a poet, an artist himself, instead of being merely a spectator. Poets have declared that *everyone* should write poetry. All art is the writing of poetry and the painting of pictures. Recently in some small movie house I saw a film in technicolor called *Northwest Passage*. I go to see films like any spectator. Now and then I am rewarded. For in this "turnip" as we call commercial films in France, one of the actors announces "Most people try to live—I try to live and paint."

To sum up, as far as the cinema is concerned, the worst films I have seen, that is, those that put me to sleep, contain ten or fifteen minutes that are wonderful. In the same way, I may add that the best films I have seen contain only ten or fifteen minutes that are worth while. Which in no way discourages me or makes me a pessimist. I do believe that the movies will become a great art one day, when the production of the film will really be in the hands of one mastermind.

(Editors' Note: Man Ray wishes us to state that the ideas contained in this article do not necessarily represent his complete and final statement on the cinema.)

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LUIS BUNUEL: Notes on the making of UN CHIEN ANDALOU

Historically, this film represents a violent reaction against what was at that time called "avantgarde cine," which was directed exclusively to the artistic sensibility and to the reason of the spectator, with its play of light and shadow, its photographic effects, its preoccupation with rhythmic montage and technical research, and at times in the direction of the display of a perfectly conventional and reasonable mood. To this avantgarde cinema group belonged Ruttmann, Cavalcanti, Man Ray, Dziga Vertoff, Rene Clair, Dulac, Ivens, etc.

In *Un Chien Andalou,* the cinema maker takes his place for the first time on a purely POETICAL-MORAL plane. (Take MORAL in the sense of what governs dreams or parasympathetic compulsions.) In the working out of the plot every idea of a rational, esthetic or other preoccupation with technical matters was rejected as irrelevant. The result is a film deliberately anti-plastic, anti-artistic, considered by traditional canons. The plot is the result of a CONSCIOUS *psychic automatism,* and, to that extent, it does not attempt to recount a dream, although it profits by a mechanism analogous to that of dreams.

The sources from which the film draws inspiration are those of poetry, freed from the ballast of reason and tradition. Its aim is to provoke in the spectator instinctive reactions of attraction and of repulsion. (Experience has demonstrated that this objective was fully attained.)

Un Chien Andalou would not have existed if the movement called surrealist had not existed. For its "ideology," its psychic motivation and the systematic use of the poetic image as an arm to overthrow accepted notions corresponds to the characteristics of all authenti-

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cally surrealist work. This film has no intention of attracting nor pleasing the spectator; indeed, on the contrary, it attacks him, to the degree that he belongs to a society with which surrealism is at war.

The title of the film is not arbitrary, or the product of a joke. It possesses a close subconscious relation with the theme. Among hundreds of others this title was chosen because it was the most adequate. As a curious note, it can be added here that it actually produced obsessions in certain spectators, a thing which would not have occurred had the title been arbitrary.

The producer-director of the film, Bunuel, wrote the scenario in collaboration with the painter Dali. For it, both took their point of view from a dream image, which, in its turn, probed others by the same process until the whole took form as a continuity. It should be noted that when an image or idea appeared the collaborators discarded it immediately if it was derived from remembrance, or from their cultural pattern or if, simply, it had a conscious association with another earlier idea. They accepted only those représentations as valid which, though they moved them profoundly, had no possible explanation. Naturally, they dispensed with the restraints of customary morality and of reason. The motivation of the images was, or meant to be, purely irrational! They are as mysterious and inexplicable to the two collaborators as to the spectator. NOTHING, in the film, SYMBOLIZES ANYTHING. The only method of investigation of the symbols would be, perhaps, psychoanalysis.—*Translated by Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley.*

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JOHN AND JAMES WHITNEY:
Audio-Visual Music

I

Each individual who has identified himself with the abstract film medium has begun from scratch and devised every detail of his technical means. Inevitably, form under this circumstance has been preeminently interrelated with technique. Form is weak or it flowers just so well as the means are integrated. The perfection of means, however, does not proceed along a simple forward path of progress, because this art is not a science with a rationale more than any other. And it is actually a very new thing that so much technology must be brought to bear upon an art form as it is in the field of the cinema. Perhaps the abstract film can become the freest and the most significant art form of the cinema. But also, it will be the one most involved in machine technology, an art fundamentally related to the machine.

In our work, we have continuously sought an equilibrium between technical limitations and creative freedom. We have partially achieved it, lost it again, and now search for it once more at a higher level. Our first film made with an optical-printer but without sound, is a case in point; the equipment and the state of our general technique determined a set of limitations which have never since been so circumscribed. Yet within those limitations was found an area of freedom open to creative manipulation which has never again been so vast. This film rapidly acquired unity and simplicity.

With our expanded means, including sound, today we endeavor to reestablish that equilibrium. This, we believe, has become possible as we accept the technical means at our disposal as adequate and proceed to widen the area of freedom within discovered and accepted limitations. The films produced over the five year period since our first, seldom have been completed before their value to us as

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experiments were negated by new experiments following a new approach to form and with altered and sometimes improved equipment. Thus, they frequently manifest one technical quality or another that is subtly out of order with their formal organization. Still, they are better described as exercises than experiments, for they are rehearsals for a species of audio-visual performances that we can very well visualize now.

II

It is a commonplace to note that film and sound today have become a permanent unity. We are attracted by the prospects of an idiom as unified, bi-sensorially, as the sound film can be.

Naturally, we have wanted to avoid weakening that unity, which would be the very essence of an abstract film medium.

It occurred to us that an audience could bring with it its own disunifying distractions in the form of numerous past associations and preconceptions were we to use previously composed music in relation to our own abstract image compositions. We, therefore, tried the simplest, least common, primitive music we could find. But another source for disunity became apparent. In this case, the dominant source of distraction was a contradiction between the origins (the players, instruments, time, place, etc.) of this kind of music and our animated image.

Thereafter, little thought was given to any other consideration than to search for a method of creating our own sound by some means near as possible to the image animation process, technically and in spirit.

III

The sound track of all our films to date was created synthetically by the device which came into being as a result of these conclusions. Without attempting to describe it in detail here,* its principle resembles less a musical instrument than certain devices used for charting the rise and fall of ocean waves. Pendulums instead of waves create the ebb and flow movement. This motion is greatly demagnified and registered on a narrow space of the motion picture film provided for a sound track. No sound is needed to produce these patterns on the sound track. The patterns themselves generate tones in the sound projector. The instrument has a selection of some thirty pendulums adjusted in frequency relationship to each other so as to form a scale. They can be swung singly or in any combination.

*A description can be found in Vol. I, No. I Hollywood Quarterly

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We value the instrument despite certain distinct limitations for an assortment of reasons. An immediate practical one is that it as much as provides us with a means where otherwise there would be none at all. Sound recording of original music even at the 16 mm. scale is prohibitively expensive and presents enormous difficulties for the amateur.

Some other reasons have to do with adaptability of the instrument to our purposes. In composing the sound, we seek to exploit a spatial quality characteristic of the instrument which reinforces that effect of movement in space which we seek to achieve in the image. Since both image and sound can be time scored to fractions of a single motion picture frame, there is opened a new field of audio-visual rhythmic possibilities. The quality of the sound evokes no strong image distraction such as was observed in other music. Consequently, the sound is easily integrated with the image. The scale of the instrument is adjustable to any intervals we may choose including quarter tones and smaller. This permits use of graduated ascending or descending tonal series. They correspond in quality of feeling and variability to certain types of image series, such as, for example, an enlarging or diminishing shape, an ascending or descending shape, or a color series.

In concluding this section it should be observed that there is for us perhaps more personal freedom than is possible in any other motion picture field today. Our sound and image technique provide a complete means accessible to one creator. We believe in the future of the abstract film medium as one differing from the others in that it demands none of the large scale collaboration typical in present motion picture fields.

IV

We seek to extend certain principles which have evolved over the past forty years by the work and thought of such men as Marcel Duchamp and Piet Mondrian.

During this time, in painting, spatial limitations of the particular, human, real world have generally given way to a concern with a conceptual simultaneity of space-time. Mondrian sought "a truer vision of reality" by destroying the particular of representation, thus liberating space and form in terms of equilibrium.* By a mechanical destruction of the particular we believe it possible to approach anew this problem. We seek a new equilibrium — an equi-

*See Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art; Piet Mondrian; Wittenborn & Co., New York.

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librium on a temporal frame as in music. And we seek a balance of contrasting plastic *movements*.

Obviously Western Art forms have been no less determined and limited by their accepted creative means than our work is limited and its character is determined by our mechanical means. Our very realm of creative action is implicit in the machine. Emphasis is necessarily upon a more objective approach to creative activity. More universal. Less particular. More so by virtue of the inherent impersonal attribute of the machine. We discern a creative advantage here similar to that deliberately sought after by both Mondrian and Duchamp however opposed their respective points of view; Duchamp, an anti-artist, and Mondrian, seeking a purity of plastic means.

But the machine is yet a poorly integrated, clumsily handled invention else man would not be face to face with his destiny by it today. Personal contact with new creative fields by way of the machine would hardly be worth struggling after were it not for the tremendous variety of new clay to be found there, its universality and its close kinship with modern experience.

Our animating and sound producing devices do not respond to our touch as a musical instrument responds to the virtuoso. Aside from our own admitted inexperience there are clear-cut historical reasons for this. The devices of art and music which have made Western Art forms possible, originated in antiquity and have evolved slowly paralleling the life of that culture. The introduction of the machine in such proportions as has taken place only in this century constitutes a quantitative change effecting a distinct qualitative revolution. The motion picture camera is no more an improved paint brush than our sound track device is an improved musical instrument.

It is our opinion that the work and ideas of Marcel Duchamp with his underlying principles, against hand painting, and, a studied exploitation of the mechanisms of chance, make a significant esthetic contribution to the advancement of this "qualitative revolution." Perhaps his concept of irony provides a clue to the whole future of machine realized art. He defines his meaning of irony as ". . . a playful way of accepting something. Mine is the irony of indifference. It is a meta-irony."* Our own experience has been that this corresponds very closely to the correct philosophical disposition by which the resources of the machine may be accepted and employed.

*See View Magazine. Duchamp Number, Series V No. 1.

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ERICH POMMER: The Origin of Dr. Caligari

It was about a year after the end of the war. Within this year I had organized a small film studio, named Decla, and I was quite pleased with the way things were going—in spite of all the post-war restrictions on money and materials and electric power. Our most valuable assets were our enthusiasm and our ingenuity.

The enterprise didn't leave anyone much time for relaxation, so I used the lunch hour as my rest period. During this lunch hour, one day, there was a timid knock on my office door—which I didn't bother to answer. Nevertheless the door was pushed open, and when the two young fellows there saw that someone was in the room, they knocked again, and asked for Mr. Pommer.

I said, "I don't think you can see him today."

They took turns speaking. "We have a story that we're sure would interest him."

"Mr. Pommer is a very busy man—leave your story—I'll see that it gets to him."

"No, sir, we can't do that. We know that when we submit it officially, it just goes through a lot of secretaries (pardon!)—so we're determined to read it to him personally."

"I'm *sorry*."

But they weren't giving up yet. "That's a shame. We have a lot of ideas, but we never seem able to reach the right man—and this idea is really something new—*different*."

I tried another tack, to get rid of them. "I'll let you into a secret. I'm Pommer, but I can't listen to any stories today. Can't you leave it with me?"

"Please give us ten minutes—if you don't like what we've told you at the end of ten minutes, stop us, and we'll leave."

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They stayed three hours, and before they left I had written them a check for 800 marks. They called their story *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. The two boys (I was only five years older than they, but I felt like another generation) were both from Prague. Carl Mayer was working as a *dramaturg* (a combination play-reader and textual editor) at a small theatre on the Blumenstrasse. It was his collaborator, Hans Janowitz, who had had the idea for the script, after seeing a newspaper item about a Hamburg murderer. Janowitz and Mayer had developed the incident into a story that they insisted must be executed in a definite *style*. The artist whose style they wanted followed was Alfred Kubin, the hero of Prague's radical artists. While Mayer and Janowitz talked about art, I was thinking of rather different aspects of the script. The mystery and macabre atmosphere of the Guignole was currently in vogue in German films, and this fitted perfectly. They saw an "experiment" in the script—I saw a comparatively inexpensive production.

There was a pause of four or five months before actual filming was planned. Wiene was considering directing it. The boys tried to get Kubin excited in their project. In the meantime I put them to work on another fantastic mystery idea, and put *Caligari* in the hands of the three artists who constituted Decla's designing staff—Warm, Herlth, and Rohrig, whom I had met as a soldier painting sets for a German military theatre in Braila, Rumania.

The studio had a very limited quota of power and light, and on the day when we were notified that we had exhausted the month's quota several days before the end of the month, my three artists brought in a proposition that seemed to me absurd, and even reactionary—"Why not paint lights and shadows on the sets for this Caligari film?"

When I protested against this return to primitive film-making, Herlth (the quietest of the three) made this statement, "Look here, Mr. Pommer, we are living in an age of expressionism, and in painting these sets in this style, we can do a great deal more to emphasize the important elements of the story."

"Boys, you're all crazy. It's impossible to combine fantastic, unreal, flat sets, with real, round people."

The *next day* they brought me a series of drawings, which they had probably had all along, but were afraid to shock me with the day before. When I remained unconvinced, they coaxed me into

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letting Wiene make a test scene. When the test was screened, both Mayer and Janowitz were present. We were all convinced—and the writers dropped their efforts to engage Kubin. In fact, they were so impressed that they wrote their second script with this new method in mind, which may be the reason *Genuine* was so bad a film.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari cannot be called a typical Carl Mayer script, but it did serve to introduce him to his true medium. During its production the young writers saw each day's rushes, a habit that Mayer maintained throughout his screen-writing career. His powerful visual imagination was kept constantly stimulated by close contact with the entire production process—and from *Caligari* can be dated Mayer's well-known determination to calculate the camera and set as vital dramatic elements.

Other writers wrote (and still write) scripts that have to be translated into film terms. Carl Mayer wrote true *film-scripts* and, in so doing, inspired all film artists in that famous post-war period of German cinema.

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OSKAR FISCHINGER:
My Statements are in My Work

To write about my work in the absolute film is rather difficult. The only thing to do is to write why I made these films.

When I was 19 years old I had to talk about a certain work by William Shakespeare in our Literary club. In preparing for this speech I began to analyze the work in a graphic way. On large sheets of drawing paper, along a horizontal line, I put down all the feelings and happenings, scene after scene, in graphic lines and curves. The lines and curves showed the dramatic development of the whole work and the emotional moods very clearly.

It was quite an interesting beginning, but not many could understand this graphic, absolute expression.

To make it more convincing, more easily understood, the drawings needed movement, the same speed and tempo as the feeling originally possessed. The *cinematic* element had to be added.

To do this, the motion picture film was a welcome medium. And so it happened that I made my first absolute film.

Then sound was added to the film. On the wings of music faster progress was possible.

The flood of feeling created through music intensified the feeling and effectiveness of this graphic cinematic expression, and helped to make understandable the absolute film. Under the guidance of music, which was already highly developed there came the speedy discovery of new laws—the application of acoustical laws to optical expression was possible. As in the dance, new motions and rhythms sprang out of the music—and the rhythms became more and more important.

I named these absolute films Studies; and I numbered them—Study No. 1, Study No. 2, and so forth. These early black and white studies

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drew enthusiastic response at the time from the most famous art critics of England and Europe.

Then came the color film. Of course, the temptation was great to work in color, and I made thereafter a number of absolute color films. But I soon found out that the simplicity of my own black and white films could never be surpassed.

The color film proved itself to be an entirely new art form with its own artistic problems as far removed from black and white film as music itself—as an art medium—is removed from painting. Searching, for the last thirteen years, to find the ideal solution to this problem, I truly believe I have found it now, and my new, forthcoming work will show it.

Now a few words about the usual motion picture film which is shown to the masses everywhere in countless moving picture theatres all over the world. It is photographed realism—photographed surface realism-in-motion . . . There is nothing of an absolute artistic creative sense in it. It copies only nature with realistic conceptions, destroying the deep and absolute creative force with substitutes and surface realisms. Even the cartoon film is today on a very low artistic level. It is a mass product of factory proportions, and this, of course, cuts down the creative purity of a work of art. No sensible creative artist could create a sensible work of art if a staff of co-workers of all kinds each had his or her say in the final creation—producer, story director, story writer, music director, conductor, composers, sound men, gag men, effect men, layout men, background directors, animators, inbetweeners, inkers, cameramen, technicians, publicity directors, managers, box office managers, and many others. They change the ideas, kill the ideas, before they are born, prevent the ideas from being born, and substitute for the absolute creative motives only the cheap ideas to fit the lowest among them.

The creative artist of the highest level always works at his best *alone,* moving far ahead of his time. And this shall be our basis: That the Creative Spirit shall be unobstructed through realities or anything that spoils his absolute *pure* creation.

And so we cut out the tremendous mountains of valueless motion picture productions of the past and the future—the mountain ranges of soap bubbles, and we must concentrate on the tiny golden thread underneath which is hardly visible beneath the glamorous, sensational excitement, securely buried for a long time, especially in our

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own time when the big producing and distributing monopolies control every motion picture screen in an airtight grip.

Consequently, there is only one way for the creative artist: To produce only for the *highest* ideals—not thinking in terms of money or sensations or to please the masses.

The real artist should *not care* if he is understood, or misunderstood by the masses. He should listen only to his Creative Spirit and satisfy his highest ideals, and trust that this will be the best service that he can render humanity.

It is the only hope for the creative artist that the art lovers, the art collectors, the art institutes, and the art museums develop increasingly greater interest in this direction, and make it possible for the artist to produce works of art through the medium of the film.

In this connection I wish to express my deep gratitude to one great American institution which has in the past helped so many artists in an idealistic, unselfish way, and which has made it possible for me to do a great amount of research work in the direction of the absolute, non-objective film. I am speaking of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York under the direction of Curator Hilla Rebay.

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MAYA DEREN:*
The Camera as a Creative Medium

Nothing can be achieved in the art of film until its form is understood as the product of a completely unique complex: the exercise of an instrument which can function, simultaneously, both in terms of discovery and of invention. Peculiar also to film is the fact that this instrument is composed of two separate but interdependent parts, which flank the artist on either side. Between him and reality stands the camera . . . with its variable lenses, speeds, emulsions, etc. On the other side is the strip of film which must be subjected to the mechanisms and processes of editing (a relating of all the separate images), before a motion picture comes into existence.

The camera provides the elements of the form, and, although it does not always do so, can either discover them or create them, or discover and create them simultaneously. Upon the mechanics and processes of "editing" falls the burden of relating all these elements into a dynamic whole.

Most film-makers actually rely upon the automatically explorative action of the camera to add richness to their material. For the direct contact between camera and reality results in a quality of observation which is quite different from that of the human being. For example the field of vision of the human eye is comparable in area to that of a wide angle lens. But the focus of the eye is relatively selective and, directed by the interests and anxieties of the human being, will concentrate upon some small part of the entire area and will fail to observe or to remember objects or actions which lie outside its circle of concentration, even though these are still physically within the field of vision.

The lens, on the other hand, can be focused upon a plane (at right angles to the camera) within the depths of that field and everything

*Excerpts from Maya Deren's *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form, and Film*. The Alicat Bookshop Press, Yonkers, 1946. Reprinted by permission of Maya Deren.

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within that plane of focus will be observed and recorded with impartial clarity. Under favorable light conditions, the depth of that plane can be extended enormously, so that the camera can record in a single frame a greater richness of reality than the human eye would ever be aware of in a glance. The camera thus contributes a dimension of observation to photography by compensating for a prejudice of human vision. It does not discover, however, in the sense of revealing more than the most perfect or leisurely vision could perceive.

The burden of my argument is that it constitutes a gross, if not criminal esthetic negligence to ignore the immense wealth of new elements which the camera proffers in exchange for relatively minute effort. Such elements, constituted already of a filmic dynamic of space and time relationships (related to all other accessible elements), are the elements proper of the larger dynamic of the film as a whole.

In the film dance which I have made, the dancer begins a large movement—the lowering of his extended leg—in a forest. This shot is interrupted at the moment when the leg has reached waist level, and is immediately followed by a close-up shot of the leg in a continuation of its movement—with the location now the interior of a house. The integrity of the time element—the fact that the tempo of the movement is continuous and that the two shots are, in editing, spliced to follow one another without interruption—holds together spatial areas which are not, in reality, so related. Instead of being destructive to a dramatic integrity, the mobility of the camera and the interruption and resumption of action, here creates an integrity as compelling as that of the theatre, but of a totally different quality.

There are many uniquely filmic time-space relationships which can be achieved. I can point, at random, to a sequence from another film. A girl enters and crosses the frame at a diagonal. She disappears behind a sand dune in the foreground at the edge of the frame, and the camera at this moment actually stops operating. The girl walks away a considerable distance and takes her place behind a farther dune. The camera then resumes its shooting and immediately begins to turn (in a panoramic movement) in the direction in which the girl just left the frame. Since it starts registering at the

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identical position at which it stopped some five minutes before there is no spatial indication of the time which has transpired, and consequently we expect the girl emerging from the dune which has just concealed her. Instead she emerges from the dune much more distant, and so the alienation of the girl from the camera exceeds the actual time which would have presumably been necessary. In this case, a continuity of space has integrated periods of time which were not, in reality, in such immediate relationship; just as in the previous example, time and space were inversely related, according to a similar principle.

To the form as a whole, such techniques contribute an economy of statement comparable to poetry, where the inspired juxtaposition of a few words can create a complex which far transcends them.

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GEORGE LEITE:
The Creative Arts and the Collective Film

A work of art adds to our environment by its own creation, rather than debasing our environment by attempting to imitate what already exists. There is the creative work of art which is the vanguard film and there is the debasing failure which is sold by Hollywood.

The historical basis for the birth of an art form such as that of the vanguard film is immediately apparent. Within all traditional forms of art there has been an attempt, during the last century or so, to interpret the machine. A desperate attempt to come to some sort of terms with these man-made objects, as numerous as trees, which may some day give us freedom but which must first be assimilated, made part of our mental as well as physical environment.

In painting, the Futurists probably made the most successful try at overpowering the machine, their minds without doubt had solved the problem, it was the brush which was archaic and an invalid tool. In poetry, the desperate attempt by Hart Crane to create from machine Myth, was by its very nature doomed to failure, the question had been wrongly stated and there could be no possible answer. In music the work of Edgar Varese came closest to making use of the machine as a musical instrument. All were, however, with their various degrees of success, merely extending their own particular field of art. They were bound by their traditions, no matter to what degree they had tried to throw them off. Men by the millions lived and died by machines, a few hundred saw what these few men were trying to do. Something more was needed, something born from the machine.

The machine-makers themselves were of little help, they had sold their machines to men who were far too busy grabbing surplus-value to be at all worried about the assimilation of the machine into the culture they were forming. No, it was definitely the job of the artist,

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the job was difficult and the pen and brush were somehow inadequate, the majority of artists slunk back to Deluges and Islands of Responsibility. The task was indeed difficult, the traditions of the particular arts had to be disremembered, a fresh start was indicated, there had to be a break with magic and superstitions and a make with the piston and lens.

With the invention and eventual development of the motion picture camera there was for the first time a machine to lie alongside the pen and the brush, a machine for the creation of the art of the machine! A medium with motion implicit, not tricked from the canvas as the Futurists had attempted; with machine as the viewer and viewed rather than the sought after and worshiped as in Hart Crane. The camera forced artists to gather and gather together.

The machine forces collectivity. Two-dimensional art became for the first time the joint work of artists and even the scientist was included. Directly connected with the laboratory and the machinist as enjoyment, the vanguard film became the finest basis for a truly collective and democratic art form.

As the editor of an art-literary magazine I see the creative film as the best possible means of broadening the cultural front. The best possible means of tightening the critical centers of the greatest number of people. I see the vanguard film as one of the most important of the creative arts today, taking the place of none, but taking the place it has created for itself. I see the vanguard film giving impetus to the reading of poetry, listening to music and to the enjoyment of painting; I see it as the vanguard of art, drawing new thousands into participation. I see the vanguard film repairing the dangerous breach caused by the bifurcation of art and science and giving new strength to both, as being but two sides of the same coin. I see an art form, collective and fresh, big enough for the entire world.

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SERIES ONE PROGRAM NOTES

Editor's Note: The following films, with the exception of the *Poetry in Cinema* program, are all readily available on 16-mm. film from the sources indicated. This has been the only excuse for their selection since they obviously do not represent even a half complete listing of avantgarde or experimental films. Nor do they necessarily represent all those available on 16-mm.

Likewise, the group headings are very general and somewhat inaccurate. The classification of motion pictures usually falls into such categories as: Comedy, History, Adventure, Fantasy, Documentary, Avantgarde, etc., or into a historical listing under the film's nationality. The breaking down of such a scattered group as *Avantgarde* into anything other than chronological history is open to dispute. A far more accurate arrangement than the following could be made. They are listed here in the order of their presentation on the Series One Art in Cinema showing—an order that, in many cases, was dictated by the availability of the films at the time.

FIRST PROGRAM—SOME PRECURSORS

Richter's article

The Avantgarde or advance guard movement, as applied to the film, came into existence and flourished in Europe between 1920 and 1930. The movement was an almost inevitable result of the flux and shifting of post World War I artistic values. The cinema, as a new medium of artistic expression, was seized upon by artists, writers, and esthetic theorists, whose experimentation removed it completely from the realm of the commercial film.*

The world depression on one hand and the introduction of the sound film on the other hand, brought the movement to an untimely end as a public manifestation, and as a vigorous, consistent school of personal experimentation. Since then Avantgarde work, having no regular channels of distribution, and

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suffering from the financial competition of commercial films, has been spasmodic and isolated. Yet it has remained the only form of cinema that allows the individual artist to make a completely individual statement in this most potent of new art forms.

But in the early part of the century, before the groundwork was laid for the big commercial production of films, all cinema had an experimental character. The precursors shown here are examples of the development of cinematic technique and expression up to the 1920s, the only technical tradition upon which the Avantgarde could base their work.

Zecca (French). The following films were directed by Ferdinand Zecca for Pathe Freres. (Loaned by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) c1906 *Whence Does He Come?* c1906 *Slippery Jim.* c1907 *Fun After the Wedding.* 1905 *Scenes of Convict Life.* 1905 *A Father's Honor.*

Unless it be for his realistic melodrama, it is as a maker of trick films that Zecca may most be prized. He was not the only man to make such subjects, but he showed a particular facility for them, proving himself a comic master of the impossible, the unlikely and—from a strictly decorous or law-abiding point of view—the undesirable. In subjects like *Slippery Jim,* Zecca combined the impish humor with a gift for making the camera persistently defeat or pervert the laws of space, time, gravity and ordered reason. The simplest device in *Whence Does He Come?*—a mere reversal of action—provided ample amusement for early filmgoers: it is curious that such devices have not been used more often of late. Last, but not least, the free farce of *Fun After the Wedding* points backward to circus foolery but forward to Keystone comedy, since this was the kind of subject which inspired Mack Sennett with the desire to become a comedy director. (Iris Barry; reprinted from *Film Notes* by permission of the copyright owners: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

ONESIME HORLOGER (French 1908) directed by Jean Durand for Gaumont. (Acquired through the courtesy of Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert.) (Loaned by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

Little is known of Jean Durand, though his *Onesime Horloger* was long remembered and praised. Here the capacity of the motion picture to fool with time provides the very core of the plot and not, as in other trick films, merely an adventitious surprise or laugh. The mathematician Flammarion and H. G. Wells in *The Time Machine* could both have claimed parental ties with this ingenious comedy of an impatient hero who takes liberties with the whole temporal machinery of a city in order to come speedily into his inheritance. Made in three days, this film was regarded as a masterpiece and, when a younger generation turned back to pioneer films as a pure source of inspiration, it furnished Rene Clair with the impetus to make his early *Paris qui Dort* (1923). (Iris Barry; reprinted from *Film Notes* by permission of the copyright owners: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

SYMPHONIE DIAGONALE (German 1918-20). Produced and directed by Viking

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Eggeling. (Loaned by the Museum of Modern Art.) This was the first abstract or "absolute" film. The basic element of the work is line, the patterns mainly the variations on a two-dimensional ground, the screen, in contrast to the following film by Eggeling's colleague, Hans Richter, which utilizes flat two-dimensional forms moving in three directions. "The screen was a blackboard to Eggeling and a window to Richter." (See Ivor Montagu in Close Up (London) December, 1927.)

RHYTHMUS 21 (German 1921). Designed and photographed by Hans Richter. (From the Museum of Modern Film Library.) Originally called *Film in Rhythm*. Original length: 120 ft. Final length: 250 ft. Here Richter took the form the screen gave him—the square and the rectangle—and moved them rhythmically with and against each other. The first film to use negative as positive. Theo van Doesburg sponsored the premiere in Paris, introducing Richter as a Dane because of post-World War I feeling against Germans. (Museum of Modern Art, New York; Cinematheque Francaise, Paris.) (From Herman Weinberg's An Index to the Creative Work of Robert J. Flaherty and Hans Richter, published by the British Film Institute.)

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (German 1919). Produced by Decla-Bioscope. Directed by Robert Wiene. Scenario by Carl Meyer and Hans Janowitz. Design by Herman Warm, Walter Reimann and Walter Roehrig. Photography by Willy Hameister. Cast: Werner Krauss as Dr. Caligari; Conrad Veidt as Cesare; Fredrich Feher as Francis; Lil Dagover as Jane; Hans Heinz von Twardowski as Alan; Rudolph Lettinger as Dr. Olsen; Rudolph Klein-Rogge as a criminal. Acquired through the courtesy of Ufa. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

This is one of the few films that has remained constantly in circulation. It has never been popular; it was not seen outside Germany for some time after it was made, and then often obscurely in small cinemas and private clubs while German films were still taboo in ex-enemy countries; but it is one of the three most famous of all films—the other two being the *Birth of a Nation* and *Potemkin*. And while it has directly contributed little or nothing to the development of cinematic art, it has played an important part in film history.

The influence of this film has been, almost entirely, outside the studios. When it was brought to America in 1921 by Samuel Goldwyn, when it was finally seen in Paris and in London, it acted as a powerful stimulus to critics, even when it was used blindly as a stick to beat Hollywood with, by those who felt that such a film as *Riders of the Purple Sage* was so patently a less artistic effort than *Caligari* as to be intrinsically a less admirable one. Actually, when it first emerged, it reflected a whole trend of the modern movement in the arts but especially in the theatre, as developed in Germany. Unknown though this movement was to the general public, *Caligari* was recognized as having something to do with art, and so it had, though at this distance it is possible to question whether it had, basically, much to do with the art of the cinema. Yet, no matter what its merits or demerits, this film attracted new and intelligent audiences to the cinema and conferred prestige on it. It encouraged repertory cinema move-

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ments in the larger cities. It encouraged experiments in film-making, though often of quite a different type.

Above all, it suggested that the film had as yet no more than scratched the surface of its potentialities. Though it stands outside the historical succession of cinematography, *Caligari* is unquestionably an arresting piece of work, remarkably consistent, and one which gives sharp visual pleasure.

It was for its settings that *Caligari* was first acclaimed and has remained famous. They are not particularly cinematic and, indeed, hardly anything takes place in the film that could not have been presented identically on a stage. They derive from expressionist paintings, through the settings of expressionist plays and particularly of *Der Sturm* group, on view in Berlin at that time. Even today, these settings of painted canvas and hangings and shadows retain their power to suggest that atmosphere of menace and of madness which they were intended to express. The actors, especially Krauss and Veidt, in make-up and in movement alike succeed in harmonizing with this atmosphere of unreality. In the original version a crazily angular lettering was used for the subtitles, but it has unfortunately been impossible to reproduce these.

The story, perhaps intentionally, is neither clear nor logical. A young man is telling a companion of strange and unhappy events that have befallen him—his friend murdered and his fiancee driven insane with fright by a somnambulist under the mesmeric control of an evil mountebank. After we see him force his way into the local asylum only to find the mountebank there, not as an inmate, but as the head alienist, it becomes clear that the narrator is himself insane and his story a mere hallucination; and the distorted landscapes and dwellings are therefore seen as appropriate to express the unreality of his vision of the world. (Iris Barry; reprinted from *Film Notes* by permission of the copyright owners: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.) (See also: *Cinema* by C. A. Lajeune. London, Maclehose, 1931. pp111-17.)

SECOND PROGRAM—THE FRENCH AVANTGARDE

These examples of the early French Avantgarde pointed in every direction except that taken by the commercial film or "turnip" as they were dubbed by the avantgardists. While some concentrated on telling a story in visual images —removing the film still further from techniques of the stage or the novel—others dispensed with the story entirely and created compositions of pure form and movement.

THE SMILING MADAME BEUDET (1922). Produced by Vandal-Delac-Aubert. Directed by Germaine Dulac. Scenario by Andre Obey from the play of the same name by Andre Obey and Denys Amiel. Photography by A. Morrin. Cast: Germaine Dermoz as Madame Beudet; Alexander Arguilliere as M. Beudet; Madeleine Guitty as Madame Lebas; Jean d'Yd as M. Lebas. Acquired through the courtesy of Germaine Dulac and the Cinematique Francaise. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

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Madame Dulac was already an experienced director when, in collaboration with Louis Delluc, she made *La Fete Espagnole* in 1919. Delluc exercised considerable influence on the development of the French film after the war, both as director and through the medium of his books and his original scenarios. He fathered a whole succession of psychological screen dramas, of which this is an early example. Madame Dulac's direction of the film is both sensitive and bold. If her use of slow-motion photography and trick-work is somewhat excessive, nevertheless she succeeded with what was, at the time, signal originality in expressing by pictorial means the atmosphere and implications of Andre Obey's study of domestic conflicts. In this film, the original French titles and verse have been preserved. (Iris Barry. Reprinted from *Film Notes* by permission of the copyright owners: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

MENILMONTANT (1924-25). Produced and directed by Dmitri Kirsanov. Photography by Leonce Crouan and Dmitri Kirsanov. Cast: Nadia Sibirskaya as the younger and Yolande Beaulieu as the older sister. Acquired through the courtesy of Dimitri Kirsanov. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

Made at a minimum of expense and with poor equipment by a young Russian emigre who had previously been a violinist in a movie theatre in Paris, this is unquestionably one of the most remarkable of amateur films. Kirsanov's direction generally, his use of poetic imagery, his free cutting and—above all—the performance of Nadia Sibirskaya in the main role, entitle the picture to all and more of the praise it has elicited from European critics. (Iris Barry. Reprinted from *Film Notes* by permission of the copyright owners: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

BALLET MECANIQUE (1924). Produced and directed by Fernand Leger. Photography by Dudley Murphy. Acquired through the courtesy of Mr. Leger. (From the Museum of Art Film Library.) "The War had thrust me, as a soldier, into the heart of a mechanical atmosphere. Here I discovered the beauty of the fragment. I sensed a *new* reality in the detail of a machine, in the common object. I tried to find the plastic value of these fragments of our modern life. I rediscovered them on the screen in the close-ups of objects which impressed and influenced me. However, I felt that one could make their impression much stronger. In 1923 I decided to 'frame' the beauty of this undiscovered world in the film. In this medium I worked as I had done before in painting. To create the rhythm of common objects in space and time, to present them in their plastic beauty, this seemed to me worthwhile. This was the origin of my *Ballet Mecanique*." (Fernand Leger in Hans Richter's History of the Avantgarde.)

ENTR'ACTE (1924). Directed by Rene Clair from a scenario by Francis Picabia. With Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie, Jean Borlin. Commissioned by the Ballet Suedois de Rolf Mare. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) Rene Clair ranks with Griffith, Chaplin and Eisenstein, as one of the few men of authentic genius produced by the cinema. He began as a member of the Avantgarde movement and this, his second Avantgarde film, is pure cinema. In it,

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the mockery of the Dadaists is fused with Clair's keen wit and unerring filmic instinct to create a droll mood that could exist nowhere else but on a strip of moving celluloid. (See also: *Scrutiny of Cinema* by William Hunter. London, Wishart, 1932.)

THIRD PROGRAM—CONTINENTAL AVANTGARDE

Our inclination to expect every film to tell a story stems from our deep-rooted Hollywood heritage. Actually, a film need not tell a story any more so, for example, than does music. If we cannot discern a logical sequence of literary ideas, we should not blame the film. Perhaps none was intended. The fact remains that thousands of movies containing more or less logical ideas have passed beneath the bridge, yet these simple experiments still remain fresh and stimulating. Although there is much in them that might seem trite to our modern eyes, there is also much in them that seems new—which is another way of defining Avantgarde.

UBERFALL (Attack) (German 1929). Directed by Erno Metzner. Written by Erno Metzner and Grace Chiang. Photographed by Hans Casparius. (From the Museum of Modern Art.) When this socio-psychological study was first released in Germany, it was banned by the censors on the grounds of brutality and inducement to crime. The director, Erno Metzner, replied to the censors: "Uberfall is a short film, and corresponds to the short story form in literature. It represents an event, merely as a fact, and dry as a report. The contents consist of the hero's increasing state of fear. All the scenes aim merely at inducing the feeling of fear, the consequence of which is the psychologically irreproachable dream of fear that has been thought out as the film's culmination."

EMAK BAKIA (French 1926). Produced, directed, and photographed by Man Ray (loaned through the courtesy of Man Ray.) "A series of fragments, a cinepoem with a certain optical sequence make up a whole that still remains a fragment. Just as one can much better appreciate the abstract beauty in a fragment of a classic work than in its entirety, so this film tries to indicate the essentials in contemporary cinematography. It is not an 'abstract' film or a story-teller; its reasons for being are its inventions of light-forms and movements, while the more objective parts interrupt the monotony of abstract inventions or serve as punctuation. Anyone who can sit through an hour's projection of a film in which sixty per cent of the action passes in and out of doorways and in inaudible conversations, is asked to give twenty minutes of attention to a more or less logical sequence of ideas without any pretention of revolutionizing the film industry. To those who could still question 'the reason for this extravagance' one can simply reply by translating the title *Emak Bakia,* an old Basque expression which means 'don't bother me'." (Man Ray, in Close-Up, August 1927.)

L'ETOILE DE MER (Star of the Sea) (French 1928). Produced, directed and photo-

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graphed by Man Ray from a poem of the same name by Robert Desnos. With Andre de la Riviere. (Loaned through the courtesy of Man Ray.) Here the peculiar beauty of a modern poem is translated into visual rhymes and visual rhythms by the use of experimental photographic techniques. The fluid, atmospheric quality is a result of shooting through a pane of obscuring glass, but when an image presents a compositional interest it is shot normally. The oscillation from hazy transfigurations to sharp, clearly-understood objectivity conveys perfectly the atmosphere of the poem which was its inspiration.

COQUILLE ET CLERGYMAN (The Seashell and the Clergyman) (French 1928). Directed by Germaine Dulac from a scenario by Antonin Artaud. Photographed by Paul Guichard (Loaned by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library). By the use of fantasy and symbolism, Madame Dulac takes us into the mind of a clergyman whose religious vows deny his normal impulses. His conscious and subconscious thoughts move across the screen with the grace of choreography. Authority, dressed first in a bemedaled uniform and then as a parson, appears and reappears to frustrate the clergyman's desires and to lawfully enjoy for himself that which the clergyman cannot have. Here, conscious symbolism is chosen to evoke definite reactions, to lead the spectator through the clergyman's frustration, resentment, and escape into a dream-fantasy where Authority presides over his marriage to the woman, only to find in the pieces of the shattered crystal, the menacing face of Authority, once again. (For a complete study of the visual symbols in this film, see Oswell Blakeston's *Freud On The Films* in Close-Up, November, 1929.)

FOURTH PROGRAM
NON-OBJECTIVE FORM SYNCHRONIZED WITH MUSIC

The Work of Oskar Fischinger (Loaned through the courtesy of Mr. Fischinger). These studies in motion and sound are complete in themselves and need little discussion here. As far back as 1914 the painter, Leopold Survage, dreamed of extending the boundaries of non-objective painting to the film, but not until 1921, with Viking Eggeling's *Diagonal Symphony* and Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21* was this dream realized. Thereafter the Avantgarde developed various theoretical approaches to the abstract film. Some, like Fernand Leger, believed it valid to photograph only real objects in their natural movements and derive the abstract statement from them by selection and editing *(Ballet Mecanique)*. Others—the "absolutists"—worked only with the mechanical animation of drawings.

The development of the sound track added a new dimension to these experiments. There had been earlier attempts at synchronization. George Antheil had written the *Ballet Mecanique* music (scored for eight pianos, etc.) but the actual physical problems of synchronization with the film left much to be desired. Not until the sound track was it possible to control sound and image simultaneously. After this it was a logical step from the silent orchestration of abstract visual

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relationships to the synchronization of them with the already abstract element —music.

Oskar Fischinger came to this country from Germany in 1937. He worked with Disney on *Fantasia*—more specifically, the Bach Toccata and Fugue section which was ultimately edited out because it was deemed "too abstract." He continues to work with problems of abstract motion and sound—one of the few pioneers in this undeveloped territory to continue a steady exploration over a number of years.

STUDY NO. 5 (German 1929). Black and white abstraction to jazz.
STUDY NO. 6 (German 1929-30). Black and white abstraction to jazz.
STUDY NO. 7 (German 1930-31). Black and white abstraction to Brahm's *Second Hungarian Rhapsody*.
STUDY NO. 8 (German c1931). Black and white abstraction to Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.
STUDY NO. 11 (German c1932). Black and white abstraction to Mozart's *Divertissement*.
COLORATURA (German 1931). Black and white study in motion and sound.
COMPOSITION IN BLUE (German 1933). Color abstraction to Nicolay's *Merry Wives of Winsor*.
CIRCLE (German 1933). Color abstraction based on circles, to Venusburg music from Wagner's *Tannhauser*.
ALLEGRETTO (American 1936). Color abstraction to jazz.
AN AMERICAN MARCH. (American 1939). A color abstraction to Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever*.

RHYTHM IN LIGHT (American 1936). Created by Mary Ellen Bute (from Brandon Films). Another conception, less rigidly synchronized, in which the moving play of light upon objects is used, rather than animated drawings. Here sound is not visualized point for point. The forms complement rather than correspond.

FIFTH PROGRAM—THE ANIMATED FILM AS AN ART FORM

A short survey of the animated film, this program attempts to examine the artistic invention and plasticity that has been this form of cinema's dominant characteristic—even when, as in the work of Walt Disney—it has been primarily concerned with the subject of entertainment rather than with experiment in the art of the film.

DRAME CHEZ LES FANTOCHES (French 1907), by Emile Cohl. This is the second of the French film pioneer's cartoons. (From the Museum of Modern Art.)

The French film industry was dominant throughout the first decade of cinema history, and its films were shown all over the world. One of the most famous of all trick subjects was Emile Cohl's *The Pumpkin Race*. Giving life to the inanimate

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in this fashion by means of stop-motion photography was a common device, but these frolicsome pumpkins were stars in their day.

Cohl did not enter film production until 1905. Originally apprenticed to a jeweler, he drew cartoons as a hobby, later studied under Andre Gill and contributed regularly to humorous periodicals. His first films were animations of marionette figures and domestic objects, but in 1908 he applied the principles of the comic strip to the screen and in *Fantasmagorie* produced what was—with one American exception—the first film cartoon. He followed it with others, and with regular movies like *Le Peintre Neo-Impressioniste* in which he caricatured the foibles of artists, models and patrons.

In 1912 Cohl came to New York to work for Eclair Journal, animated George MacManus' "Snookums" and other subjects, while passing on the benefit of his training and experience to several collaborators. Returning to France at the outbreak of war in 1914, he later continued to make cartoons but seems not to have prospered. Subjects coming from America proved more successful than his. Towards the close of his life Cohl was obsessed by persecution manias which his poverty did nothing to assuage, though to the last the old man displayed something of the gentle and mischievous gaiety so apparent in *Une Dame Vraiment Bien*. Severely injured in a fire in his room, he died early in 1938 in a pauper institution.

The following films were directed by Emile Cohl for Gaumont:

1907 *The Pumpkin Race* (British Film Institute).
1908 *Une Dame Vraiment Bien* (Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert).
1909 *Joyeux Microbes* (Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert).
1910 *Le Peintre Neo-Impressioniste* (Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert).

(Iris Barry; from *Film Notes,* reprinted by permission of the copyright owners: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

GERTIE THE DINOSAUR (American 1909) by Winsor McCay. Acquired through the courtesy of Robert W. McCay, Jr. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

Before either photography or the film were invented, children flipping over between thumb and finger little booklets of outline drawings had seen animated pictures. Many toys of this kind were invented in the 19th century by scientists (among them the astronomer Herschel) working along lines indicated in Roget's *Persistence of Vision:* they played an important part in the evolution of cinematography. Years later, it was one of these flippers or "magic booklets" that inspired Winsor McCay, famous newspaper cartoonist and creator of the comic strip "Little Nemo," to experiment with animated film cartoons. He made *Gertie the Dinosaur* independently in 1909 and showed it in vaudeville theatres, himself playing the role of interlocutor.

Animated cartoons had previously made their appearance on the screen in 1906, with J. Stuart Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces,* and in 1907, with Emile Cohl's *Fantasmagorie.* It was Winsor McCay, however, who must be regarded as the true father of Felix The Cat and all the cinema's other delightfully anthropomorphic creatures.

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THE SKELETON DANCE (American 1929) by Walt Disney (from Brandon Films, Inc.).
STEAMBOAT WILLIE (American 1928) by Walt Disney (from the Museum of Modern Art). Produced, designed and directed by Walt Disney. Acquired through the courtesy of Mr. Walt Disney.

Walt Disney had created any number of animated cartoons before his name became a household word. The first was executed in 1920 for a cinema in Kansas City. Between that time and 1927 he produced seven Fairy Tale cartoons, an *Alice* series and the better-known *Oswald the Rabbit* series. He evolved what the Disney studio refers to as the "mouse form" in the spring of 1928, after many experiments during the course of which the mouse was tried out with various kinds of clothes, ears and expressions. The first Mickey Mouse film, *Plane Crazy,* showed Mickey emulating the exploits of Lindbergh. It was silent and no bookings could be secured for it. Fame and fortune waited on the second Mickey Mouse, *Steamboat Willie,* made with sound. It scored an immediate success at its first showing in September, 1928. *The Skeleton Dance,* first of the Silly Symphonies, was made the following year.

In the Mickeys and the Symphonies alike, the brilliant use of sound as an integral part of the cartoon, rather than as an accompaniment, deserves special attention. The freshness and playfulness of these films, their technical perfection and pictorial quality are the delight of simpletons and seers the world over.

(Iris Barry; from *Film Notes;* reprinted by permission of the copyright owners: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

CARMEN (German 1933). An animated silhouette film by the artist Lotte Reiniger. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

CHANTS POPULAIRES (French Canadian contemporary). A selection of unusual animations made for the Canadian National Film Board by Norman MacLaren and Alexander Alexeiff. (From International Theatrical and Television Co.)

SIXTH PROGRAM

CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS IN AMERICA

These films represent widely separate approaches to the art of the cinema. *Glen Falls Sequence* and the Whitney's *Five Film Exercises* are both non-objective, but in the former, Crockwell is concerned primarily with intuitive expression through the play and hazard of his medium. The fluid imagery is left for each one of us to interpret in our own way. He would be the last to explain the "meaning" in the work. In this sense *Glen Falls Sequence* may be loosely termed "surrealist"—but only in method. But in the Whitney films, the simultaneous creation of sound and image—a revolutionary new conception—is based upon a care-

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fully preconsidered plan of forms very similar to those in musical composition. The technique, derived through experiments with a new creative instrument, is yet, by their own admission, in a preliminary stage.

Of the films using realistic imagery, *The Potted Psalm* is, in part, analogous to *Glen Falls Sequence* in attitude and approach. Although symbolism may often seem consciously chosen, the question of rational meaning is unimportant. Here also, the imagery stems from an intuitive, subconscious process. In the Deren film, again there is the careful working out of a preconceived theoretical study of space-time. The human figures are treated as abstract forms; their movements—accelerated or retarded by the camera—constitute an effort to create a filmic world with its own space, time, and reality.

GLENN FALLS SEQUENCE (American contemporary) by Douglass Crockwell. Mr. Crockwell writes: "About eight years ago I set up an animation easel with the camera mounted overhead and the work area arranged much as a draughtsman's desk, except that the working area consisted of several movable layers of glass slightly separated. The basic idea was to paint continuing pictures on these various layers with plastic paint, adding at times and removing at times, and to a certain extent these early attempts were successful. This basic process was changed from time to time with varying results and I have still made no attempt yet to stabilize the method. Somewhat as a consequence of this has been the fragmentary character of the work produced." (Acquired through the courtesy of Mr. Crockwell.)

MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON (1943) by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid. (Loaned by Maya Deren.)

This first film is concerned with the relationship between the imaginative and the objective reality. The film begins in actuality and, eventually, ends there. But in the meantime the imagination, here given as a dream, intervenes. It seizes upon a casual incident and, elaborating it into critical proportions, thrusts back into reality the product of its convolutions. The protagonist does not suffer some subjective delusion, of which the world outside remains independent, if not oblivious; on the contrary, she is, in *actuality,* destroyed by an imaginative action.

Such a development is, obviously, not a function of some "realistic" logic; it is a necessity, a destiny established as a logic of the film itself. Thus the formal whole is, itself, the reality and the meaning of the film. It is a whole creation out of the elements of reality—people, places and objects—but these are so combined as to form a new reality, a new context which defines them according to their function within it. Consequently, they are not symbols in the sense of referring to some meaning or value outside the film—to be interpreted according to some established system of psychology or in terms of some private, subjective association which they may evoke; they are images whose value and meaning are defined and confined by their actual function in the context of the film as a whole.

In this case, the whole is a form realized by the creative exercise of the film

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instrument, including camera and editing; the inner logic is a function of such concepts as the dislocation of inanimate objects, the reiteration of singular events, and other such film realities. (Maya Deren.)

AT LAND (1944). Conceived and directed by Maya Deren. Technical assistance: Hella Heyman and Alexander Hammid. (Loaned by Maya Deren.)

The universe was once conceived as the passive stage upon which the dramatic conflict of human wills was enacted and resolved. Today man has discovered that that which seemed simple and stable is, instead, complex and volatile; his own inventions have put into motion new forces, toward which he has yet to invent a new relationship. Unlike Ulysses, he can no longer travel over a universe stable in space and in time, to find adventures; nor can he resolve intimate antagonisms with an adversary sportingly suitable in stature. Rather, each individual is the center of a personal vortex; and the aggressive variety and enormity of the adventures which swirl about and confront him are unified only by his personal identity.

Being both a time and space art, film is especially capable, as an art instrument, of creating a form in which the integrity of the individual identity is counterpointed to the volatile character of a relativistic universe. This dynamic relationship, with all its emotional and ideological implications, is the central concern of this film. (Maya Deren.)

A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA (1945) by Maya Deren and Talley Beatty. (Loaned by Maya Deren.)

The space of the field, the ritual temple and the theater stage have been, historically, a *place* within which dancers moved, creating, in terms of their own capacities and human limitations, the physical patterns of emotions and ideas. In this film, through an exploitation of cinematic techniques, space is itself a dynamic participant in the choreography. This is, in a sense, a duet between space and a dancer—a duet in which the camera is not merely an observant, sensitive eye, but is itself creatively responsible for the performance.

Since film is a space art, the logic, the integrity of this film is visual; but since it is also a time art, it is not integrated in the plastic terms of painting, but strives for a new dimension of integration altogether. (Maya Deren.)

RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME (1945-46). Conceived and directed by Maya Deren. Photographed by Hella Heyman. Choreographic collaboration: Frank Westbrook. Principal performers: Rita Christiani and Frank Westbrook. (Loaned by Maya Deren.)

A Ritual is an action distinguished from all others in that it seeks the realization of its purpose through the exercise of form. In this sense ritual is art; and, even historically, all art derives from ritual. In ritual, the form is the meaning. More specifically, the quality of movement is not a merely decorative factor; It is the meaning itself of the movement. In this sense, this film is a dance.

This quality of individual movement, and, above all, the choreography of the whole, is mainly conferred and created by filmic means—the varying camera

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speeds, the relating of gestures which were, in reality, unrelated, the repetition of patterns so complex as to be unique in actuality, and other such means. In this sense, the film confers dance upon non-dancers, except for a passage in which the large pattern and the individual action coincide, briefly, in intention. Thus the elements of the whole derive their meaning from a pattern which they did not themselves consciously create; just as a ritual—which depersonalizes by the use of masks, voluminous garments, and homogeneous group movements—fuses all individual elements into a transcendent tribal power towards the achievement of some extraordinary grace.

Such efforts are reserved for the accomplishment of some critical metamorphosis, and, above all, for some inversion towards life: the passage from sterile winter into fertile spring; mortality into immortality; the child-son into the man-father; or, as in this film, the widow into the bride.

Being a film ritual, it is achieved not in spatial terms alone, but in terms of a Time created by the camera. Time here is not an emptiness to be measured by a spatial activity which may fill it. In this film it not only actually creates many of the actions and events, but constitutes the special integrity of the form as a whole. (Maya Deren.)

THE WORK OF JOHN AND JAMES WHITNEY
Film Notes by John and James Whitney

FIRST SOUND FILM; COMPLETED FALL 1943:
Begins with a three beat announcement, drawn out in time, which thereafter serves as an imageless transition figure dividing the sections of the film. Each new return of this figure is condensed more and more in time. Finally it is used in reverse to conclude the film. There are four sections constructed from the same three thematic ideas. They depend upon subtle alterations of color and juxtaposition of these three distinct themes for contrast.

This film was produced entirely by manipulation of paper cut-outs and shot at regular motion picture camera speed instead of hand animating one frame at a time. The entire film, two hundred feet in length, was constructed from an economical twelve feet of original image material.

FRAGMENTS; SPRING 1944:
These two very short fragments were also made from paper cut-outs. At this time we were developing a means of controlling this procedure with the use of pantographs. While we were satisfied with the correlation of sound and image, progress with the material had begun to lag far behind our ideas. These two were left unfinished in order to begin the films which follow.

FOURTH FILM; COMPLETED SPRING 1944:
Entire film divided into four consecutive chosen approaches, the fourth being a section partially devoted to a reiteration and extension of the material of the first and second sections.
SECTION ONE: Movement used primarily to achieve spatial depth. An attempt is made to delay sound in a proportional relationship to the depth or distance

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of its corresponding image in the screen space. That is a near image is heard sooner than one in the distance. Having determined the distant and near extremes of the visual image, this screen space is assigned a tonal interval. The sound then moves along a melodic line in continuous glissando back and forth slowing down as it approaches its point of alteration in direction. The line would resemble slightly a diminishing spiral as viewed on a flat plain from the side. This section concludes with a frontal assault of all imagery with an interacting tonal accent.

SECTION TWO: Consists of four short subjects in natural sequence. They are treated to a development in terms alternately of contraction and expansion or halving and doubling of their rhythm. Sound and visual elements held in strict synchronization. Color is directed through a blue to green dynamic organization.

SECTION THREE: A fifteen second visual sequence is begun every five seconds after the fashion of canon form in music. This constitutes the leading idea, a development of which is extended into three different repetitions. This section is built upon the establishment of complex tonal masses which oppose complex image masses. The durations of each are progressively shortened. The image masses are progressively simplified and their spatial movement increasingly rapid.

SECTION FOUR: Begins with a statement in sound and image which at its conclusion is inverted and retrogresses to its beginning. An enlarged repetition of this leads to the reiterative conclusion of the film.

FIFTH FILM; COMPLETED SPRING 1944:

Opens with a short canonical statement of a theme upon which the entire film is constructed. Followed by a rhythmical treatment of the beginning and ending images of this theme in alternation. This passage progresses by a quickening of rhythm, increasing in complexity and color fluctuation. After a complete repeat of this, there follows a deliberate use of the original theme in a canon form, slow and with a sound counterpart also in canon. The sound thereafter is entirely constructed upon the material derived from this section. The canon is repeated in contrasting variation by means of color and leads into a further development of the early rhythmical ideas on beginning and ending images.

A second section begins after a brief pause. Here an attempt is made to pose the same image theme of the first section in deep film screen space. As the ending image recedes after an accented frontal flash onto the screen it unfolds itself repeatedly leaving the receding image to continue on smaller and smaller. The entire section consists of variations on this idea and further development of the rhythmical ending image ideas which recur in the first section.

THE POTTED PSALM (1946). Written, produced and directed by Sidney Peterson and James Broughton. Photography by Sidney Peterson. Music by Francean Campbell. (Loaned by Sidney Peterson.)

The Potted Psalm was shot during the summer of 1946. The original scenario and shooting script were discarded on the first day. Thereafter fresh scenarios

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and scripts were prepared at least once a week for a period of about three months. The surviving film was cut into 148 parts and the parts numbered—one to one forty-eight. The scenarios then read like stock market reports.

This pullulation of literary material, finally taking a numerical form, was deliberate. What was already literary had no need to become cinematic. The resulting procedure corresponded to the making of a sketch in which, after an enormous preliminary labor of simplification, the essential forms are developed in accordance with the requirements of a specific medium.

The word *psalm* comes from the Greek meaning a twitching. The obvious reference to palm in the title connotes not only the potted Victorian spirit but the tree which is the symbol of resolution overcoming calamity, a signification based on the belief that it grows faster for being weighed down. Furthermore, the palm tree is believed by Orientals to have sprung from the residue of the clay of which Adam was formed. It would be easy to multiply meanings out of the words of this title in the same spirit of preliminary exploration that animated the authors during the course of the actual making of the film. A title is, after all, necessarily literary, not to say poetic. A little examination may not be irrelevant. Besides, it serves to emphasize the point that the film itself is multidetermined in a comparable way though on a purely cinematic and visual level.

The necessary ambiguity of the specific image is the starting point. From a field of dry grass to the city, to the grave stone marked "Mother" and made specific by the accident ("objective hazard") of a crawling caterpillar, to the form of a spiral, thence to a tattered palm and a bust of a male on a tomb, the camera, after a series of movements parodic of the sign of the cross, fastens on the profile of a young man looking into a store window. All these scenes are susceptible of a dozen different interpretations based on visual connections. The restatement of shapes serves the general purpose of increasing the meanings of the initial statements. The connections may or may not be rational. In an intentionally realistic work the question of rationality is not a consideration. What is being stated has its roots in myth and strives through the chaos of commonplace data toward the kind of inconstant allegory which is the only substitute for myth in a world too lacking in such symbolic formulations. And the statement itself is at least as important as what is being stated. The quality, for example, of rectangularity in the maternal tomb is a primary consideration. Psychologically it constitutes a negation of the uterine principle. Aesthetically it derives its force from what has been called the geometric as opposed to the biologic spirit. The definition and unification of these opposing spirits is one of the functions of a visual work. Nor is it necessary for an audience to analyze these functions. It is enough to know that they exist. At least they may be presumed to exist. Having made the assumption, it is possible to go on from there.

Unfortunately, where we go is by no means certain. The replacement of observation by intuition in a work of art, of analysis by synthesis and of reality by symbolism, do not constitute a roadmap. It is perhaps wanting too much of art to expect it to perform the kinds of miracles ordinarily demanded of world statesmen. Not a roadmap possibly but the beginnings of a method. A method

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of statement, in a medium sufficiently fluid to resolve both the myth and the allegory in a complete affirmation. (Sidney Peterson)

SEVENTH PROGRAM—FANTASY INTO DOCUMENTARY

The documentary film, being primarily concerned with the dramatization of fact, cannot be termed experimental in the sense meant here, although in the development of documentary, the experimental attitude has most certainly been the dominant approach. The best documentary films have been intensely and completely cinematic; in the process of seeking the underlying motives of factual problems and presenting them in motion pictures, all the avantgarde attitudes of free and easy experimentation found a place.

The documentary film came into its own around 1930-31. Before that, films of fact consisted either of newsreels or the sentimental, remote, idyllic treatment of factual material—*Nanook of the North, Moana,* etc. Film-makers were unable to see the realms of creative possibilities in the ordinary facets of life around them. *Rien Que Les Heures* was the first film to attempt a utilization of this material.

RIEN QUE LES HEURES (French 1926). Directed by Alberto Cavalcanti. Photography by Jimmy Rogers. Design by M. Mirovitch. Produced by Nero Films. (Loaned by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) This film was shot in four weeks at a cost of 25,000 francs. Although it may seem clumsy and passe to make such obvious comparisons between the patent leather shoes of the rich and the cats crawling in the garbage cans, still it must be remembered that this was the first attempt at an unbiased cross-section of 24 hours in the life of a city. It broke fresh ground, and in it were sown the seeds of all succeeding city-documentaries.

BERLIN: THE SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY (German 1927). Directed by Walther Ruttman from a scenario by Ruttman and Karl Mayer. Photography by Karl Freund, Kuntze and Schaffer. Produced by Fox-Europa, Berlin. Original musical score by Edmund Meisel but not available with this print. (Loaned by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) Much publicity was given Billy Wilder in his *The Lost Weekend* for the lengths he went to in securing certain natural scenes of New York by secreting his camera in packing boxes, etc. But in this film all the scenes were shot in this manner. Ruttman and Freund went so far as, in the barroom scenes, to secrete the camera in an adjacent room and shoot through a hole in the wall. Of course, this in itself has nothing to do with the artistic merit of the picture, but *Berlin* was a more complete attempt than *Rien Ques Les Heures* to weld the surface aspects of a city into a symphonic form. You will notice that in both of these films it was the creative possibilities of the material that motivated each director—and not the social implications which motivated the following film.

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THE CITY (American 1939). Directed and photographed by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke. Production supervised by Oscar Serlin. Scenario by Henwar Rodakiewicz. Original outline by Pare Lorentz. Commentary written by Lewis Mumford. Musical score by Aaron Copland. Produced by Civic Films, Inc., through the aid of the Carnegie Corporation. (Loaned by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) This famous documentary film, designed especially for the 1939 New York World's Fair, was made under the auspices of the American Institute of Planners as propaganda for the improvement of housing in America. Employing all the avantgarde techniques of cutting, editing, pacing, and conception, it has come to be regarded as a perfect document of our American civilization. Rarely have visual imagery, commentary, and music been combined to form such an emotionally powerful statement of fact. Unfortunately, the original version has been cut considerably, perhaps in an effort to shorten the film, and the magnificent wholeness of the composition has thereby been destroyed. (Jack Hillmer)

EIGHTH PROGRAM
EXPERIMENTS IN THE FANTASTIC AND THE MACABRE

LA CHUTE DE LA MAISON USHER (The Fall of the House of Usher) (French 1928) Directed by Jean Epstein from the tale by Edgar Allan Poe. Photography by Lucas. With Margaret Gance as Lady Madeline, Jean Dubencourt as Roderick Usher, and Charles Lamay as the visitor. (From The Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

The narrator — an old friend — has been invited to the House of Usher to keep Roderick company, to cheer him and help alleviate the woes that beset him — the approaching death of his beloved sister, Lady Madeline, his own mysterious nervous malady, and the weighing consciousness that he, Roderick, is the last of the Usher lineage.

> "We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempts at cheering a mind from which darkness . . . poured forth upon all objects . . . in one unceasing radiation of gloom."

Poe's genius is literary, and the transplanting of a classic from its original ground into another medium usually adds nothing to the final result, and something less to the original classic. The halation of mysterious fantasy which is characteristic of the *Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque* is so personal to Poe, to the subject matter, and to the structure of the writing, that it evaporates when rendered into another medium. One may succeed in creating a like mood of mystery and fantasy, but it will not be Poe's.— This version of one of his famous tales succeeds better than most. With a fine use of slow-motion photography, with much burning of candles, dripping of wax and billowing of drapes, we are made aware of a wild romantic beauty rarely seen in the film

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medium. The characteristically French shots of bare trees against soggy skies, of dripping Provence landscapes take on the quality of lithographs. The interiors seem lighted by candles alone. The exterior model shots of the house, however, tend to deprecate the convincing interiors.

Epstein has taken certain liberties with the story. The theme of another Poe tale, *The Oval Portrait,* has been added, as well as a suggestion of *Ligeia* and *The Pit and The Pendulum,* all of which results in a kind of Poe Festival in which the guttering candles and the deep shadows distill the general romantic horror of all Poe's stories in that realm. Yet with this build-up it is difficult to understand the "Hollywood" ending, so foreign to the entire mood and especially to the original story of *Usher.*

Nevertheless, things happen throughout the film in a magnificently illogical way. Many of the individual scenes seem meaningless as parts of a rational sequence. A bell in the belfry tolls; the camera swings slowly back and forth as if hung from a pendulum, focused on nothing more than a shelf upon which stands a suit of armor; the doctor wags his finger; the Visitor, for an unknown reason, is equipped with an ear trumpet; the locale of Lady Madeline's tomb is shifted to an island so that, one suspects, it might provide an excuse for the exquisitely beautiful shot of her gown trailing in the rowboat's wake; and the camera rolls along the floor like a breeze blowing the dead leaves before it. These shots, and not the more literal illustrations of Poe's text, are the essence of *Usher* translated into cinematic terms.

FOOTNOTE TO FACT (American 1933). Directed by Lewis Jacobs. (Loaned by Lewis Jacobs.) This is one part of a proposed four part film intended to document the depression of the thirties, which was to be called *As I Walk.* The other three parts were never completed. They were called: *Highway 66* (the scenario for this appeared in the magazine *Experimental Cinema* No. 4), *Faces In The Street,* and *Night Between The Rivers.* Miscellaneous shots were taken for each of these parts but not enough to organize any kind of structural whole. Consequently *Footnote To Fact* must stand alone. The film was to be post-synchronized, using sound in a stream of consciousness technique — including snatches of jazz, natural sounds, modern poetry, and inner monologue. (Lewis Jacobs.)

NINTH PROGRAM—POETRY IN CINEMA

JAMMIN' THE BLUES (American 1944) Directed by Gjon Mili. Photography by Robert Burks. With Jo Jones, Illinois Jacquet, Sidney Catlett, Lester Young, Red Callender, Harry Edison and Marie Bryant. (Loaned through the courtesy of Al Shmitken ot Warner Bros.) A short, directed for Warner Bros. by the famous still photographer Gjon Mili, who is best remembered for his stroboscopic action photographs appearing frequently in Life Magazine. The presentation, as short subjects, of "name" bands is one of the more unhappy manifestations of the commercial film. Here, however,— in what amounts to an experimental opus —

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the background gingerbread and the stilted conception is replaced with a fresh approach and with clean, finely lighted photography against sheer black or white ground. The cutting, too, from one large, unflattering close-up to another, is rather remarkable. Although all of this is plainly the result of applying still-picture techniques to the cinema (and in this sense, perhaps capable of receiving criticism) it nevertheless ends up by being — in its own way — a brilliant experiment in light, dark, and composition.

LOT IN SODOM (American 1933) Written, produced, directed and photographed by Dr. John S. Watson and Melville Webber. Music by Louis Siegel. With Frederick Haak, Hildegarde Watson, and Louis Whitbeck Jr. (Obtained from Martin Lewis.) A lyrical, symbolic interpretation of the story from Genesis. "With an accumulative intensity of feeling it reduces the Biblical story to its essentially imaginative symbols. The director is the poet, and these smoking plains, fluctuating shapes, tongues of fire, melted together in unusual rhythms, constitute his personal vision of the destruction of Sodom." (William Troy in NATION 138:82-4 Jan. 17, 1934.)

The debauched people of Sodom indulge in frenzied orgies. Their voluptuous faces and sensual bodies fuse into a Bacchanal revelry. Only Lot with the elders prays for his sinful people. On returning from the temple he is visited by an angel, but the angry young Sodomites resent the stranger. Lot tries to appease them, and offers his daughter as a sacrifice. To make the young men purge their evil souls Lot evokes the symbol of purity — the majestic and inspiring beauty of human childbirth. The Sodomites ignore Lot's warning and he flees with his wife and daughter as fire from Heaven rains on the debauched city. Lot's wife makes the fatal mistake of looking back — and she is turned to stone.

VORMITTAGSPUK (Ghosts Before Noon) (German 1927-28). Designed and directed by Hans Richter. Photography by Reimar Kuntze. Music by Paul Hindemith. (Loaned through the courtesy of Hans Richter.) Original length: 900 feet. Released by Tobis in 450 feet. (Recorded by Tobis in 1929.) With Darius Milhaud, Jean Oser, Walter Gronostay, Werner Graeff, Paul Hindemith and Hans Richter, as actors in it. (Loaned through the courtesy of Hans Richter.) An experimental film for the international music festival, Baden-Baden, 1928. A humorous grotesque in which objects (hats, ties, coffee cups, etc.) rebel against their daily routine. "Objects are also people" and "(they) follow their own laws"—"the rhythm of the clock" (H.R.). At the stroke of noon they gladly return to their functional state. Hindemith's score was played by an orchestra in the theatre pit, whose conductor led them from a rolling score synchronized to the speed of the film. This pre-sound device was invented by R. Blum. (Herman Weinberg, from his *An Index to the Creative Work of Robert J. Flaherty and Hans Richter,* published by the British Film Institute.)

LE SANG D'UN POETE (The Blood of The Poet) (French 1930). Written, produced and directed by Jean Cocteau. Photography by Georges Perinal. Music

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by Georges Auric. With Enrique Rivero, Lee Miller, Oddette Talazac. Narrated by Jean Cocteau. (Obtained from Martin Lewis.)

By permission of *The Kenyon Review* we reprint the following lengthy analysis by Charles Glenn Wallis of *Le Sang d'un Poete* which appeared in the *Fall 1944* issue of that publication. This does not mean that we consider Mr. Wallis' interpretation as the final or even necessarily the correct one. Cocteau has made it plain that this work of personal symbolism — any work of symbolism — should evoke individual reactions — not a general meaning. This, then, is Mr. Wallis' reaction to the film and would perhaps have no relationship even to Cocteau's intention. Yet it seems to come about as close to being a perfect example of spectator participation in cinema as one could find and we reprint it for that reason. In a profound and detailed manner it indicates what realms the cinema, as an art, might deal with, and to what extent those realms can be traversed.

THE BLOOD OF A POET. Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poete* is one of the authentic classics of the cinema, in the small group that includes *Caligari, The Ten Days that Shook the World,* some Rene Clair, and some Chaplin. It is perhaps Cocteau's own magnus opus, even if we compare it with *Thomas L'Imposteur, La Machine Infernale,* or *Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde*. And among the works of the '30's—a decade fairly arid in poetry and myth—it is one of the few landmarks, like *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Finnegans Wake*. I make these simple unanalytic statements of praise, because certain people at present disparage the poet Cocteau as a faker, a master of aesthetic sleight of hand and nothing more, and *Le Sang d'un Poete* itself as a pretty piece of legerdemain or at best as a myth purely private in its reference. This criticism seems surprising, as Cocteau's best literary works, by their irony and pathos, and by plots which have the formality of myth, are sufficiently bright and lucid to require no great amount of rational exegesis before coming to understand their meaning and appraising their propriety as poetic constructions; but at first glance *Le Sang d'un Poete* is slightly more hermetic and appears to stand in need of an interpreter.

1.

The burden of the charge of unintelligibility however is always upon the accuser; and its simple refutation is any systematic explanation of meaning and intention. *Le Sang d'un Poete* is an allegory. An allegory is a plot where the characters may be defined systematically in terms of ethics, politics, psychology, theology or some other exact science and where their actions may be translated or reduced to relations between these definitions. Further, an allegory will be explicit and a parable, if the names of the characters signify their essence, like Faithful or Mr. Worldly Wiseman in *The Pilgrim's Progress,* or an implicit alle-

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and that he is dedicating the allegories of *Le Sang d'un Poete* to Pisanello, Paolo Uccello, Piera della Francesca, as painters of arms and blazons. Internal evidence is given by the prologue and epilogue of the falling tower, whose masonry has crumbled before the story proper commences yet whose collapse is completed only after the end of the story proper, so that the temporal expanse of the total action is comprised within the instant or brief interim elapsing between the two shots of the tower, that is to say, the total action is timeless or without duration and is therefore an allegory of eternal objects rather than a story of particular things. Furthermore, within the story proper the datelessness of the action is emphasized by the mixtures of period and costume, i.e., the studied anachronism in dress signifies that the action is not merely instantaneous or without duration but is not localized at any one point of time. Moreover, the machinery of events which obey laws other than those of the natural world, viz., the transsubstantiation of a charcoal mouth to a living, of a woman into a statue; the agility and levitation of bodies, in entering a mirror or flying to the ceiling; the disproportion between cause and effect, as the quick wasting away of the bronze statue beneath the snowballs; or the coexistence in one subject of contrary states, as life and death — all this serves to compose a world of miracles, that is to say, one where the system of causes transcends its phenomenal effects, or where the phenomena are merely the iconography for various relations among ideas.

In the face of Cocteau's transparent indications that the film is an allegory his critics have not been so unsophisticated as to call it simply unintelligible or plain nonsense but have charged it with being illusionist (that is to say, any superficial plausibility of rational significance collapses like a house of cards, when the structure of the film is probed systematically — leaving only a clever exercise in fantasy) or oneiric (that is to say, the representation of a dream-world whose symbols are merely personal in their origin and limited in their intelligibility to the author or to a psychoanalyst). There are two methods proper for replying to such a charge: One, by a structural analysis aiming to show that the work has such a complete formal unity on the level of the imagination that it invites a conceptual exegesis and necessitates the possibility of an indefinite number of rational interpretations of its content; and two, by following out some line of exegesis of its content. I shall try to indicate the schematism of its unity of imagination and propose one tentative deciphering of some of its heraldic devices.

2.

Let me review the action of the film in as short a space as I can, tracing its outlines as a story and not yet as an allegory. The action proper is sandwiched between two shots of a falling tower or chimney: the first, of its collapse in process; and the second, of its completion. The film is divided, explicitly by subtitles, into four parts: one, *La Main Blessee ou la Cicatrice du Poete;* two, *Les Murs Ont-Ils des Oreilles?;* three, *La Bataille des Boules de Neige;* and four, *La Carte Volee*. To begin with *The Wounded Hand*: "While the cannons at Fontenôy thundered in the distance, in the modest room," as the voice informs us,

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a young man, gloved, with a scar and star on his left shoulder and (in manifest homage to the Valentino of *Monsieur Beaucaire*) handsome, naked to the waist, and peruked, is busy making charcoal sketches of a face. Hearing loud knocks, he takes off his gloves and is about to go to the door, when he notices that the mouth in the sketch has become living and sentient. After furiously trying to rub it off with his bare hand and at least succeeding in smudging the canvas, he opens the door; but his visitor, a young man in 18th Century formal dress, glances with horror and surprise at the picture and at his outstretched hand, and then leaves hurriedly, slamming the door. The painter shrugs his shoulders, removes his peruke, and has gone to wash his hands in the washbowl when he discovers that the living mouth is now breathing from his own right hand. For a while he gazes at it in quiet amazement but then futilely and furiously endeavors to shake it off. At his violence, the mouth cries out: "Air! Air!"; and after trying the latch, he kicks a hole through the casement and sticks his arm out. After drawing back his hand and looking out to see if he had been observed, he surrenders to the sexual invitation of the mouth, kisses it, presumably allows a (censored) fellation to consummate the caress of his torso, and then falls asleep in a chair. On waking up and noticing the sudden presence of an armless statue of a woman, he craftily gets rid of the wound in his hand by clapping it to the lifeless mouth of the statue and, triumphantly, transforming that into a living mouth; while the voice warns: "Is it not absurd to dry oneself on the furniture? Is it not absurd to awaken with a start a statue from its sleep of centuries?"

The opening shot of the second fable, *Do Walls Have Ears*? is continuous with the closing shot of *The Wounded Hand,* as the voice admonishes: "Do you think it is so easy to get rid of a wound, to close the mouth of a wound?" On trying to leave the modest room, the painter suddenly discovers that it has been transformed into a prison without outlet, viz., that the windows have vanished into wall and that a figure-length mirror has taken the place of the door. When, in fear and anger, he demands of the statute to open a way, she tells him insistently that his only recourse is to go through the mirror and stroll around, and (his incredulity finally overcome) he manages to pass through the mirror — as a diver plunges into a pool.

Walking as on the ocean floor, the hero ends up in a dingy corridor of the Hotel of Follies of the Drama, where, peeping through key-holes, he witnesses three scenes and, after peeping through a fourth, takes an active part in a fourth scene. Through the first key-hole he sees a Mexican peasant shot by a firing squad, fall to the ground, unfall to his feet in reverse motion, be shot and fall again, while the voice reminds us: "At daybreak, Mexico, the Boulevard Arago, the ditches at Vincennes, and a hotel room are equivalent" (because, as we infer, death may be met in any). As the voice announces, "The mystery of China," he moves on to the second key-hole, and observes the lighting and smoking of an opium pipe by some one not as yet visible; after unsuccessfully trying to look over the door, he peers again through the key-hole and finds an unwinking Chinese eye looking back at him. The third door has inscribed on its

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placque: *Lecons de vol* (Flying lessons). Through the key-hole he sees a little girl with circlets of bells around her wrists and ankles crouching in front of a fire-place and threatened by a schoolmistress with a cat-o'-nine-tails. The girl reluctantly but obediently seats herself on the mantlepiece, progresses up the wall, to the ceiling and a corner of the room, from which vantage point she can with impunity stick out her tongue and thumb her nose at the dismayed schoolmistress. As the voice announces: *Un rendezvous desespere,* through the fourth key-hole the hero sees a large bull's-eye revolving on a painted screen or back-drop, against which is placed some sort of settee. The head and limbs of a woman's figure are thrust one after the other through the screen, so as to form the semblance of a woman recling on the settee; and as this simple performance begins again, from a turn in the corridor or from the room itself a hand reaches out with a revolver and a voice commands him to place the barrel against his temples and fire. After the explosion, the hero, crowned with laurel and with a robe wrapped around the upper part of his body, hears the voice: "I open the way to glory!" but in rage and disgust he tears the laurel from his head, untwists the robe, and staggers back through the watery medium and out of L'Hotel des Folies Dramatiques, till he is thrown out again by the mirror, while the voice comments: "Mirrors ought to reflect a little before giving back their images." Threatening vengeance, he stalks ape-like towards the statue, seizes an axe, and demolishes the statue. As he stands there among the plaster fragments, the whitish dust begins to settle upon his face and shoulders, as the voice warns: "In smashing a statue, you run the risk of becoming one yourself"; and as the scene shifts to the next fable, we see a commonplace bronze statue of a seated man, against a background of some tall building from which the facade has been torn away.

In *The Snow-ball Fight* proper, there is a bronze statue of a seated man in a semi-private square or court-yard in the dead of winter. Some bare-legged schoolboys enter the square and start snowballing one another, scuffling around and clambering over the statue, in movements which are both completely realistic and as harmonious as a ballet. As snowballs strike the statue, it gradually crumbles away and disappears. After its dissolution, the student Dargelos, "the fighting cock of the class," as the voice introduces him by name, is shown standing besides the now vacant pedestal. Most of the schoolboys are now playing at strangling one of their fellows with his scarf. Dargelos, "in whose hands a snowball is as deadly as a Spanish knife," throws a snowball at his buddy, who waits, in loving fear and patience, the blow which fells him to the ground. Terror-stricken by his handiwork, Dargelos and the other school boys run off. "The snowball," the voice comments, "marked (etoila) the heart of the victim and marked the blouse of the victor erect in his solitude, the dark victor whom nothing protects."

In the final fable, *The Stolen Card,* the slain boy (who is living still) lies there in the snow, but over his body a card table has been set up, at which the hero, in tails, and a woman in evening dress who resembles the statue, are seated playing cards. Another young man, in 18th Century costume, and cloaked and

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masqued, stands beside the table. Men and women of fashion come and seat themselves in the balconies of the house overlooking the courtyard as if in boxes at the opera, intent on seeing and on being seen rather than watching the card game. The woman smilingly threatens: "If you don't have the ace of hearts, my dear, you're a goner!" Quickly and surreptitiously, the hero leans over and extracts an ace of hearts from the jacket of the little dead boy. At this critical moment, a negro, whom the voice announces as the guardian of the child and who, glistening with oil, is wearing swimming trunks, has some contraption with wings attached to his back, and walks with a limp in his left leg, comes out of one of the houses, takes up the child, and buries him elsewhere, makes as if to go off but remembers to take the ace of hearts out of the hero's hand before leaving. The 18th Century spectator watches with intense anticipation as the woman plays her cards. The hero's heart beats visibly and audibly beneath his swallow-tail coat. He plays his cards, draws a small revolver from his pocket, and shoots himself in the temple. The fashionable world in the balconies applaud without having observed what has happened. The woman, by putting on some black arm-length gauntlets, "becomes a statue again," and, after receiving the cloak from the spectators, walks off through one of the gateways, "not leaving footprints in the snow." After coming out of a doorway flanked by busts of Corneille and Racine, she marches off with a solemn bull, whose brindled back suggests the map of Europe. Once again she is seen in movement, now a purely stylized figure holding in her right hand a lyre made out of the bull's horns and in her left a globe of the world. Lastly she is seen in complete stillness, a statue's head without a body, reposing in a fold of drapery, along with the lyre and globe, as the voice proclaims: "Ennui mortel de l'immortalite." And then we see the tower-chimney complete its collapse.

I have described the action at some length (and perforce with the gaucherie of bald narrative rather than in a specifically cinematic fashion), because the "text," the film itself, is not readily available (in fact, it has hardly been shown in this country outside a few metropolises); and, in order for any exegesis of the cinema to be intelligible, considerable information about its content is required.

3.

Now first let me make some cursory generalizations about the structure and content of the film — sticking fairly close to the literal level — before proceeding with a more detailed analysis. The falling tower serves formally as a symbol of a beginning and an end; and, in content, it introduces the theme of destruction in general and even, since the cause of the collapse of the tower is not shown, that of self-destruction. Now within the action proper, it should be noted that the relation of person to person or even thing to thing is usually that of victim to victor or agent to patient and that the crises in the action are often reversals of this relation: viz., in *La Main Blessee*, the painter and the sketch, the painter and the statue, in *Les Murs Ont-Ils des Oreilles?* the peasant and the firing squad, the schoolmistress and the child, the actress and the suicide, and once more the painter and the statue; in *La Bataille des Boules de Neige*, the

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boys snowballing and the statue, the boys strangling one of themselves with his scarf, Dargelos and his buddy; and in *LaCarte Volee*, the hero and the boy in the snow, and finally the hero and himself as suicide — are all obvious instances of the victor-victim or agent-patient relationship. Among the reversals, there are direct inversions of the victim-victor relation, e. g., the painter by getting the wound in his hand becomes victim to the crayon sketch which he had tried to victimize by smudging out its mouth; in L'Hotel des Folies Dramatiques, the mocking girl becomes the victor over the schoolmistress; at the mystery of opium, the painter passes from being the watcher to being the watched; the dust of the statue which he demolishes transforms him into a statue; Dargelos, by throwing the fatal snowball, becomes the victim of his own victory. There are also reversals of action or its outcome: the painter gets rid of his wound as he acquired it, viz., by friction against an artificial mouth; from being a prisoner with the statue and trying to get out, he becomes an outsider peering in through the key-holes in the corridor of L'Hotel des Folies Dramatiques; by a camera trick, the Mexican peon falls and then unfalls; the natural laws of gravity are reversed by the little girl's flying lessons; the painter's ejection from the mirror is a camera reversal of his entrance into it; his vengeance upon the statue is a reversal of his earlier subservience to it in entering the mirror; and in *La Carte Volee*, the woman becoming a statue is a reversal of the partial vivification of the statue in the second fable; and the hero's true suicide is a reversal of the false one. Accordingly it is evident that the separate incidents usually compose a unification of some or other contraries; and hence the whole film at first glance has a right to be considered, in the Coleridgean categories, as a work of the Imagination rather than of Fancy, even short of the exegesis of its iconography.

Still keeping to the literal level of interpretation, let me attempt to outline a structure for the whole of *Le Sang d'un Poete*. I shall postulate that this tetrad of fables is divisible into two dyads: *La Main Blessee* and *Les Murs Ont-Ils des Oreilles?* constituting the first; and *La Bataille des Boules de Neige* and *La Carte Volee* the second. Let me try to show that the plots of these two dyads are materially the same — the formal difference being that in the first the action is one of mystery and illusion, and in the second, one of knowledge and truth — making all due allowances for the rhetoric of trope and ambiguity in which each fable is couched. The scene of the first two fables remains substantially the same: it begins and ends in a certain room, with an interlude in the Hotel of Follies of the Drama. And the scene of the last two is substantially the same: an open courtyard. Further, the action of the first two takes place wholly *indoors*, and that of the last two, *outdoors*, which, on the analogy of Plato's cave, is evidence that their relation is one of illusion to reality.

The plot of *La Main Blessee* is essentially the destruction of an image or icon, viz., the erasure of the sketch, followed by the reception of a wound, viz., the mouth in the hand; and that of *La Bataille des Boules de Neige* is similar, viz., the crumbling away of the statue beneath the snowballs and the mortal blow sped from the hand of Dargelos; and as the painter received his wound outwardly from the sketch which was destroyed, similarly the slayer Dargelos is

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introduced by name standing by the pedestal of the destroyed statue. The vivification of the statue by the wounding mouth in *La Main Blessee,* I do not count as a separate theme: for the original mouth is miraculous and unknown in its causation; consequently its appearances and transmutations will, in poetic probability, be many; while the mortal blow, as such, is one and final, and natural and determinate in origin. The plot of *Les Murs Ont-Ils des Oreilles?* is, I think, that of the journey through an unfamiliar medium, viz., the subterranean world behind the mirror, leading to a false suicide (at the instigation of a woman) and the false transformation of a man into a statue. (The destruction of the statue of the woman I should regard as the completion of the sub-plot introduced by its vivification in *La Main Blessee,* and as providing the machinery for the metamorphosis of the man into the statue.) Similarly, in *La Carte Volee* the pilgrimage of the dead boy's guardian (he wears an apparatus for flying and swimming trunks and has a limp: hence walking on the earth is an unfamiliar mode of locomotion for him) leads to the true suicide of the hero, followed by the woman's turning into a mythical statue — which constitutes a real glory as opposed to the false glory in *Les Murs Ont-Ils des Oreilles?* In brief, the theme of each might be epigrammatized as: the wound, the suicide, and the statue. In this topic, I have wished to stress the relation of parallelism between the two halves of *Le Sang d'un Poete,* since in making an explicit interpretation of its iconography, its linear progression will inevitably be more evident.

4.

Now let me hazard that as an allegory, *Le Sang d'un Poete* is a myth of the life of the poet; and in its doctrinal conclusion is not unlike James's *The Lesson of the Master,* viz., that a strict abnegation of the personal life is necessary for the poet. But whereas James, so to speak, preaches a moral lesson, arguing from an unsuccessful instance of the attempt, that it is *impossible* for a poet to combine natural happiness and a self-dedication to his art, and hence that he *ought not to try* to do it because if he does so he will fail in his art; Cocteau suggests simply that if he has been made a poet, it will not matter what he tries to do (although he must) because he will find all possibilities closed, except that of self-abnegation in his art. Indeed, James's style of moral rhetoric is that of the practitioner of an august but still human profession, giving fatherly advice and warning to a junior member; while Cocteau's is that of a hierophant initiating a novice into mysteries which are celebrated in public but whose secret meanings are thereby all the more safely guarded.

The allegory of *Le Sang d'un Poete* (which Cocteau had once announced as *La Vie d'un Poete*) might be described, for the purposes of this essay, as "the pilgrimage of a poet." The linear story tells of a progress from being a Naive Poet, through various intermediate roles, to being a depersonalized poet. *La Main Blessee ou la Cicitrice de Poete* tells of the progress from Naive Poetry to archaeology. The young man sketching furiously at the easel is of course the figure of the poet. For on his left shoulder he has a scar which is marked with a star, the sign of Jean Cocteau; and since the artificer of the film is a poet, his symbolic signature must also be mark of a poet. He is a Naive Poet because he

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is making a series of simple likenesses or improvisations. What, if any, relation there is between the mark of the wound and his gift as an artist, we do not know. His naivete becomes sophisticated when he discovers that poetry is magical. The crayon sketch, ostensibly a lifeless copy of something real, contains a living mouth, i. e., poetry may, in some mysterious fashion, transcend its own limitations as an outward symbol and present a reality equal to that of which it is a copy or give a direct insight of such a reality. But the magical power of poetry is still limited by its nature as an imitation, and consequently it is an incomplete reality which it achieves, viz., a mouth and not a whole person or even face, that is to say, it is a monster. It is significant that he does not become conscious of this magical power, until there is a visitor or messenger from the outside world. In his first naive surprise and horror at the magic of poetry, he tries to persuade himself, by exercising a negative power of self-criticism, that such is not the case, i.e., he tries to erase the drawing with the hand which he had used in making it; and for the moment he succeeds in fooling himself. But the keen-scented philistine from the outside world is not so easily deceived. It is only when the painter tries to wash his hands, i.e., to remove the outward marks of his vocation, that he recognizes his real stigma. His discovery of the mouth in his hand is his recognition that, while the magical effect may reside in the poem, the magical power is in the poet himself. It becomes further evident that this power is daemonic, like another substance within him; for it is both rational, i. e., it talks to him, and erotic, i. e., it kisses. That is to say, the poet's pleasure in making poetry is both intellectual and symbolically sexual. For a short while he lives in communion with this power. But since he does not understand it (for its existence appears to him to be uncaused and miraculous) he still tries to deny it in some way. His transfer of the mouth to the pre-existent statue, I take to be a symbol of a compromise which he tries to effect, viz., he no longer tries to deny universally that poetry has daemonic and magical properties, but seeks to impute them to the art of the past, of which he becomes the interpreter or archaeologist himself. For since he has shown so effectually (or at least to his own satisfaction) that poetry of our classical past has this daemonic property, by this very profession he is as much tied up with the daemon as if he acknowledged himself to be a poet. For this archoeologist, no less than the poet, remains face to face with the daemonic inspiration behind poetic productivity.

And therefore the poet in *Les Murs Ont-Ils des Oreilles?* finds himself a prisoner with the statue in a windowless, doorless room whose only aperture is a mirror. The mirror, let us say, signifies contemporary art (for art "holds the mirror up to life") as opposed to the art of the past, which was unrealistic (for the statue had no arms) and daemonic. The poet manque supposes that in contemporary art, he can escape into a world which is non-magical and non-daemonic; and abandoning his profession of archaeology and critcism, he plunges into the role of aesthete and dilettante, in which he achieves a sexual satisfaction like that of a voyeur. The allegory portrays only his relation to the theatre; for the four episodes in L'Hotel des Folies Dramatiques compose a comedy of the

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theatre in general and of the contemporary theatre in particular, at which he is a mere spectator as he peeps through the key-holes (and you will remember that the modern theatre, where the stage is, so to speak, a room with the fourth wall removed, has been called the "peep-hole" theatre). The four scenes through the key-holes signify four properties of dramatic poetry, represented comically or satirically, in respect to the contemporary drama: the first, viz., the fall, unfall, and fall again of the peon before the firing squad, signifies the reversal or peripety, which was the mainstay of the classical tragic plot but which in a debauched contemporary theatre is like a camera trick; the second, viz., the opium pipe and the Chinese eye, may signify seriously the property of mystery, which is inherent in all poetry, i. e., its inexhaustibility by rational analysis, so that the poem remains still looking back at reason, as the Chinese eye at the spectator; or comically, that the theatre is a spiritual opium, although as an imitation of life it may still be found to be looking back at you; third, viz., the flying lesson, the quality of sublimity, which in the contemporary theatre quickly passes into the ridiculous; and fourthly, the figure on the sofa and the false suicide, the confusion between a poetic imitation and reality — a confusion which may arise through the very nature of the theatre itself. For on the stage living persons act out artificial roles against real furniture and an artificial backdrop, just as the living limbs appear on a real settee against a painted screen. Consequently the artificial roles may become confused with the living players, and the drama with real action. The moment of the suicide is the dilettante's attempt to imitate within his own life an artificial action; for it is at the *command* of the other figure that he aims the revolver and pulls the trigger; moreover, the semi-hypnotic and sudden manner in which he obeys also suggests that it is out of unreasoned imitativeness and not from reasoned choice that he commits the act. Furthermore, the generic act of imitating a stage drama is fabled as a suicide, because it is the imitation of an imitation and therefore the negation of his natural living. Hence the suicide must be a falce suicide, because it is impossible to die a *natural* death merely by imitating an artificial action. The poet manque finds himself crowned with laurel, as if his own tragedy had won the contest; but as he is not a playwright but a dilettante, he surrenders his reflected glory in order to return to a world a little more real than that of L'Hotel des Folies Dramatiques. (It is also possible to take the fourth episode as symbolizing an excursion into acting itself, whether the theatricals are professional or amateur; the glory is false because the hero derives it from playing a role constructed by another poet and not from making his own poetry.) Cast out of the mirror, viz., abandoning his role of aesthete and dilettante, the hero becomes an iconoclast and seeks to negate the value of the classial past as the prime symbol of a daemonic and evil power. But "a casser une statue, on risque d'en devenir une"; and the hero finds himself gradually petrifying. "Man becomes the image of the thing he hates" when the hatred is simply the negative inversion of a love without understanding, and not the necessary negative complement to a positive and rational love. Consequently, in attempting to persuade himself universally that the daemonic, magical power of poetry is non-existent and to deny the seat of

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this power in himself, he finds that he has transformed himself into something as lifeless and immobile as a conventional statue in a public square. This statue is really a false ego, which is formed out of the total suppression of the poetic daemon, and is consequently a statue within the soul of the poet, just as the partial inhibition of the poetic daemon, in transferring the living mouth from the hand to the plaster-of-Paris face, resulted in the daemonizing of an external object, our archaeological or poetic heritage.

Consequently *La Bataille des Boules de Neige* should be interpreted, I think, as a flashback: the recollection of the childhood incident in which the hero received his original wound — a wound in the heart which in his later forgetfulness appeared transformed into a scar on his shoulder. The wound was unrequited love — the death of the heart and of the child within himself, from the blow of the snowball sped by the hand of the student Dargelos, "le coq de la classe." And the development of the power of poetry to a daemonic strength within him was an erotic substitute for the loss of love. This recollection of his childhood further destroys the statufaction of his ego which was caused by his ignorance of the relation between the developed daemonism of poetry and himself. In his imagination the figure of Dargelos has taken the place of the statue, because the ego is the repository of the privations of love. Consequently the loss of the love of Dargelos is the primary privation; and hence the ego-formation represented by the statue, which was caused by the final self-deprivation of poetic power (symbolized by smashing the statue of the woman) is dissolved on recognizing Dargelos, who returns a deadly snowball in answer to love, as the source of the primary wound. That is to say, as the smashed statue is to the statufied poet and as the slain child is to Dargelos, so is the daemonic power of poetizing to the poet manque and the boyhood love to its unrequital. For the statufaction caused by totally suppressing the daemon of poetry is secondary as a psychic effect in comparison with the boyhood loss of love.

In *La Carte Volee* the hero is no longer statufied, i. e., he is no longer dominated by the false ego formed by his denial of the poetic daemon, but the possibilities of action still open to him are still limited by the ego formed by his original loss of love as a boy. He is now trying to be a man, viz., by making love to a woman — like all poets, before the eyes of a fashionable world which does not understand what is happening. But since the child in himself is lying there slain, his own heart dead, love can only be a game, conventional and nonspontaneous, played by means of mere symbols and outward forms, viz., the playing-cards, in contradistinction of the schoolboys' snowballs, which were natural things of a sort. As he can win the game only if he has the ace of hearts, he tries to purloin from the past the love which was in the heart of the child. But the negro guardian angel, who (negatively by his limp, and positively by his wings and swimming trunks) appears to belong to another element than the earth, to another world, and who might be interpreted as a symbol of the irreversibility of the past, is suddenly there to prevent him from *using* a part of the slain boy, i. e., from indulging in the self-deception that what was effectively destroyed in his boyhood is still recoverable. Accordingly the hero, as cut off

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from the sources of life represented by the boy, is himself nil in relation to the woman. Hence he can no longer be a complete man at all, but can only be man qua poet pure and simple, that is to say, his recognition of this reduction in humanity must be his symbolic suicide as a man. Similarly, the woman does not actually change into the statue, but her place is taken by the statue or muse (we note that the woman statue has a different face from that of the woman playing cards); for now the only possible fructifying relationship is between the poet and his muse or between the sculptor and his statue; the relation between man and woman has vanished. For the moment, part-statue and part-woman, she departs, in order to assume the substance and all the regalia of poetic immortality. The divine bull which carried Europa awaits her and itself becomes reduced to its symbolic meaning, viz., the two emblems of her office: the lyre of song and the cartographer's globe of universality. The woman has now become transformed into the mythical formal schematism of a bust, and the temporally unfolded action is seen to lead to the idea of the "deathly boredom of immortality." The poet has attained his salvation; but it is the salvation of artifice, like Yeats's Byzantium, and neither natural nor divine, but constructed by a man after a laborious and heart-destroying discipline.

5.

If the foregoing interpretation — tentative and cursory in scope and presumably incorrect in certain details — is postulated as giving a true allegorical plot, even if a skeletal one, it is evident that the unity discovered by rational exegesis is not exhaustive of the due proportionality between whole and part, which is manifest to the imagination as the film unrolls. But this is not surprising since the analysis has been to some extent a guess at an enigma. That is quite apart from the question of the exhaustibility of an imaginative unity by rational analysis. For since the plot of the allegory is not *deducible* from a configuration of ideas but merely serves to instantiate those ideas (for the cinematic medium, which the scenario, or schema for the actual plot, presupposes, is itself a nature which the ideas behind the allegory do not presuppose): it follows that the unity of the plot is not necessarily given completely by the unity of those ideas. For over and above the conceptual unity of the plot, there will be unities of part with part within the total structure which seem as unified as if they were conceptual unities but which are not resolved by any conceptual analysis: these are the unities of rhetoric and decoration. Theoretically, one cannot point to this or that quantitative part and say that rational exegesis ends with that element, but rather that while exegesis may account for *why* these elements should be unified in this fashion, it cannot demonstrate that the symbolic and aesthetic expression actually fulfills its conceptual and ideal intention within the limits of the imagination. An aesthetician might say that the iconographer is concerned completely with the final cause of the allegory but only imperfectly with the formal cause: It would be more correct to say, in Aristotelean fashion, that since the final cause is the perfection of the formal, the iconographer is occupied primarily with the formal cause of an allegory — conceived as a system of ideas — while its final cause lies in its perfection of symbolic expression within the aes-

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thetic medium. It is this perfection of expression which Kant called "the aesthetic idea," because it seems inexhaustible in relation to the meanings discoverable by reason.

Looking at *Le Sang d'un Poete* superficially, it is obvious that its aesthetic power resides in its special combination of simplicity of elements, enigma of intention, and a pervading sense of an underlying rationality. But as, in ethics, the principle of virtue may be formulated as: Act according as your maxim may be made universal; similarly in poetics, the principle of classicism might be stated as: Unify your content with such formalities as are universal in scope. For the actual plot of *Le Sang d'un Poete* is narrow in its significance. (In fact, it is paradoxical for a hero to be a poet. For a hero is some one who acts or suffers. But the poet as poet does not act or suffer but is the maker of fictions about those who act or suffer. Cocteau resolves this paradox by making poetizing the inevitable outcome of a sequence of actions and sufferings, like the death or calamity which was often the outcome of an ancient tragedy.) But the scope of the plot is universalized by defining its content in terms as powerful as the relation of victim to victor, of agent to patient (which is metaphysically the fundamental relation in all human action, whether the action be conceived as social or as occurring within the soul of one individual) and by unifying its plot-structure by the formal device of the reversal, which, as Aristotle argues, has a most powerful psychological effect, and which, as a mode of unifying poetic contraries in a time-scheme, distinguishes (in Coleridge's sense) a work of the Imagination from one of Fancy.

TENTH PROGRAM—THE SURREALISTS

ANAEMIC CINEMA (French 1925). Designed and executed by Marcel Duchamp with the assistance of Man Ray and Marc Allegret. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) For many years Duchamp experimented with a method of mobile design he called *roto-reliefs*. These were ordinary phonograph records upon which were painted various plane geometric shapes which, when rotated, produced astounding optical effects, and an illusion of third dimension. Duchamp's aim to eliminate the traditional tools of the artist and substitute for them mechanical tools which would give rise to a mechanical esthetism devoid of human personality resulted in a number of amazing contraptions. One of them consisted of a group of multi-sized glass blades fixed to a motor-driven axle, a device which nearly killed Man Ray when a blade flew off at high speed. *Anaemic Cinema* is another variation on his theme of the rotating spiral and circle. (See Gabriel Buffet's articles in *View*, series V, No. 1.)

Maya Deren observes that *Anaemic Cinema* creates an "optical pun": "Like the rest of his work the film of Marcel Duchamp occupies a unique position. Although it uses geometric forms it is not an abstract film, but perhaps the only optical pun' in existence. The time which he causes one of his spirals to revolve on the screen effects an optical metamorphosis: the cone appears first concave, then convex, and, in the more complicated spirals, both concave and convex

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and then inversed. It is *time,* therefore, which creates these optical puns which are the visual equivalents . . . of the inserted phrases which also revolve and in so doing, discloses the verbal pun. (Maya Deren, in her *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form, and Film.* The Alicat Bookshop Press, Yonkers, 1946.

UN CHIEN ANDALOU (An Andalusian Dog) (French 1929). Written, produced and directed by Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali. With Pierre Bacheff as the cyclist. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) In 1929 Luis Bunuel, a poet of Andre Breton's original surrealist group, and the painter Dali, collaborated on a film which they were "going to plunge right into the heart of witty, elegant, and intellectualized Paris with all the weight of an Iberian dagger."* The motivation of the original surrealists had its being in a revolution against both realism and abstraction: that realism in painting which was destroyed once and for all by photography, and abstraction—the antonym of realism—which they considered pseudo-intellectual and pretentious. Thus surrealism was originally more than an artistic protest: it was a social protest as well. Further than desiring to reinvest art with literature, history, comedy, humanity, etc.,—qualities which the surrealists saw lost in purely non-objective art—they reacted violently against the intellectual snobbery that trailed in the wake of abstract art. It was not unusual then, that when *Chien Andalou* was first shown at Studio Vingt-Huit in Paris it created a near-riot. Bunuel and Dali collaborated a year later on *L'Age d'Or,* and the reaction of the audience at the premiere was so violent that the gendarmerie cleared the hall. Soon afterwards all prints were burned at a public bonfire. However, at least one print of this famous film is still in existence for it was shown again in Paris this spring (1946) at the Cine Club de Paris.

*Dali: *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali.*

The enigmatic nature of the contents of *Chien Andalou* has provoked scores of psychoanalytical interpretations, all of them different, and all of them personal. Because of this, the only approach to a discussion of the film must be based first upon a clear understanding of *why* it was made, and second, upon the spectators' own reaction to it. (See Luis Bunuel's essay: *Notes on the Making of Un Chien Andalou.)*

SPECIAL PROGRAM NOTE

DREAMS THAT MONEY CAN BUY (American 1944-46) Produced, written, designed and directed by Hans Richter. Assistant director, Miriam Raeburn. Chief cameraman, Arnold Eagle. Second Cameramen, Meyer Rosenblum and Herman Shulman. Sound editor, Jean Oser. Assistants, George Lubalin and John Stix. Running time, approximately 100 minutes.

The film tells the story of seven people in the office of a heavenly psychiatrist. He looks into their eyes and finds there on the inside of the retina the images of their dreams and wishes. They come to him to escape, for a short moment, the terrible struggle for survival which is breaking against the office door. They must go back finally—but with the satisfying doubt of whether the inner world is not just as REAL (and more satisfying) as the outer one.

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The visions seen in the "inner eye" of these seven people are realized after suggestions, drawings, objects, (or, as in the case of Man Ray, after an original script) of six modern artists. They appear as compensations for the outer world in the eyes of the seven people:

ALEXANDER CALDER's mobiles (sculptures in motion) form a tinkling celestial solar system, "a Ballet in the Universe," with music by Edgar Verese; and his "circus" of wire figures complete with ringmaster, lion-tamer, and strong man, etc.

MARCEL DUCHAMP's color records moving in precise rhythms, together with the life-animation of his famous painting *Nude Descending a Staircase,* with music for prepared piano by John Cage.

MAX ERNST's drawings inspired the story of passion and desire of a man listening to the dreams of a sleeping girl; a romantic study of sex in 1850, with music by Paul Bowles, and a stream-of-consciousness monologue written by Ernst.

FERNAND LEGER contributed his version of American folklore—an unhappy love story of two mannequins, in a mechanical style, with lyrics by John Latouche.

MAN RAY's own story is a little satirical version of movies and movie audiences, in which the audience gets the maximum out of a film by imitating it, with music by Darius Milhaud.

HANS RICHTER's personal sequence deals with the Narcissus problem in an unorthodox way: A man who meets his alter ego, discovers his "real" face—it is blue. Played by Jack Bittner.

The film is partly in color, and partly in black and white. It will be released in Spring, 1947. (Hans Richter)

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PAUL VELGUTH: Notes on the Musical Accompaniment to the Silent Films

This matter seems to be entirely arbitrary, depending upon a personal attitude of whether the silent film should be shown silently, or accompanied by appropriately chosen music. That there should be no music to the older silent films is a rather pure and pedantic attitude since there has actually never been "silent" films in the sense of viewing them in a black and utterly silent void. Nevertheless there is complete justification in the idea that no music is better than the wrong music. We need to cite no further example in behalf of musical accompaniment than the fact that the classic *Potemkin,* conceived and realized to the highest degree in terms of silent visual rhythms alone, was later put to a musical score by Edmund Meisel at the request of Sergei Eisenstein.

As a precedent for dealing with this question we asked Hans Richter for his attitude. His reply settles the matter, as far as this book is concerned, once and for all. "I believe firmly," he writes, "that music for the silent avantgarde film is *essential.* Of course it depends what music. With my own *Rhythmus 21* and Eggeling's *Diagonal Symphony,* I play Bach. With Duchamp's film — Ravel. With Leger's — first African drums, then a polka, and then a boogie-woogie. This is just to show you that I have no inhibitions about using whatever music there is. However I do not believe in the synchronization of sound and image . . . I agree with Man Ray that we must avoid complete synchronization. We should find a way to let the sound and the picture move on its own in the same direction, but nevertheless, separately. This refers to the spoken word as well as to the musical or other sounds."

The following list of selections for accompaniment were found to be completely successful from the standpoint of establishing a mood and moving that mood along a parallel with its development on the screen. No attempt was made to make a scene for scene correlation, nor was the music allowed to dominate the film. For this reason the less familiar sections of the available record library were utilized wherever possible. Originally, many of the films had scores written for them, but since they were unobtainable, it was necessary to deal with them much the same as the rest. In addition, an effort was made to determine what was originally used or specified by the director, etc. Given time, it would be possible to carry this research to a completion. The best source would

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be, perhaps, Mr. Theodore Huff, who arranged the musical accompaniment for the Museum of Modern Art's film programs — using original music wherever possible. The following selections, however, are generally available on records.

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (Wiene): The following records played in sequence with the interspersions noted below — such interspersions being of sequential length. Harris *Benjamin Album,* sides 5-6-1-2-3. #11-9217-B, 11-9216-B, 11-9214-A, 11-9215-A, 11-9216-A. Toch *Quintet For Strings,* sides 1-2-3-5-6. #71153-D, 71154-D, 71155-D, 71156-D. Stravinsky *Concerto in D Major,* Brunswick Polydor #95005-A, 95003-B. (Repeat 95003-B if necessary.)

Interspersions: All taken from Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* Carnival: Sides 1 and 2. Victor 16111-A, 16112-A. Fair: Sides 6 and 7. Victor 16113-B, 16112-B. Hut and creature: Side 3, last part of Victor 16113-A. Somnambulist: Side 4. Victor 16114-A.

SMILING MADAME BEUDET (Dulac): Not all of the film was shown, therefore the recordings go only as far as the film was shown. Open with Milhaud's *Suite Provencal,* side 2, part 1. Victor #11-8502-A, thence to: Debussy, *La Damoiselle Elue and Printemps,* Victor #DM-363. Play in order: Side 8, #12054-B, Side 1, to voices, #12051-A, then sides 5-7-6-7, #12053-A, 12054-A, 12053-B, 12054-A.

BALLET MECANIQUE (Leger): The well-known score for this film was written by George Antheil, but it is not available on records. We ran the film silently, but Hans Richter recommends African drum rhythms, a polka, and boogie-woogie.

ENTR'ACTE (Clair): Original score written by Erik Satie, but since it was unavailable, the following music was substituted: Open with Honneger's *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra,* Sides 1 and 2, Victor #8765-A and B. Milhaud, *Le Boeuf sur le Toit,* #C-D15074-5. Funeral: March Funebre, from *Hamlet,* Columbia #68429-D. March: Mahler, *Symphony Number 1,* sides 6 and 7, Columbia #11611-D, 11612-D. When tempo becomes normal go to side 7, # 11612-D. When Chase begins play Milhaud, *Protee,* sides 2 and 6, side 6 repeated if necessary. Victor #11-8981-A, 11-8980-B. End with Milhaud, *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra,* side 3. Columbia #68738.

MENILMONTANT (Kirsanov): Open with Prokofieff's *Scythian Suite,* Sides 6 and 5 (Play only the first half inch of side 6). #DM-1040, 11-9091-B, 11-9092-B. As soon as the murder sequence is over, play from the album of *American Works for Solo Wind Instruments,* record #18101-B, while the children are shown. When the graves are shown and the mourning sequence begins play from the *Miaskowsky Symphonietta,* the variations movement, Victor #12092-B and 12093-A. At the cut-in of the city sequence, the first side of Tansman's *Tryptique for String Orchestra,* Victor #11944-A. When the mood becomes quiet and the Man appears, play all through the subsequent scenes of the assignation

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and seduction, music from Hansen's *Romantic Symphony,* sides in the following order: 2-4-6. DM 648, #15954-A, 15956-A, 15955-B. Where the girl is marking the wall, play again from *American Works for Solo Instruments,* this time record #18102-B. This should take up through the birth of the child. With the immediately following city sequence, this time in the rain, play sides 7 and 8 of the Hansen Symphony, #15954-B, 15953-B. With the showing of the Abandoned in the Park sequence, play Howell's *Elegy,* sides 1 and 2, *Columbia* #69751-D. With the scene of the city at night play the Pierne *Impressions de Concert Hall,* side 3, Decca #25397-A. At the point where the child is given to the sister, play over part of side 2 of Howell *Elegy,* Columbia #69751-D. When the final scene — a murderous fight, begins, play side 1 of Prokofieff's *Scythian Suite, DM1040.* #11-9091-A. We suggest that it be so timed that the long descending passage more or less comes to a conclusion at the same time as the film.

EMAK BAKIA (Man Ray): Man Ray requests old jazz specifically. Any collection of old jazz will do. We happened to find some old popular records recorded in Germany about this period and they were sufficiently unknown to provide a little interest and at the same time not detract from the picture. We believe that the continental jazz style would fit better with this film than the more familiar American types.

L'ETOILE DE MER (Man Ray): For this film Man Ray suggested French popular music. The following selections were used. As to the order, the only important thing is to begin with *Je ne t'aime pas,* Polydor 522.988, and during the brief train sequence, *Paris Mediterranee,* Polydor #524.355. *Un Jeune Homme Chantait,* Polydor #524.355, *Elle Frequentait la Rue Pigale* and *Je n'en Connais pas la fin,* Polydor #524.513. *Je ne t'aime pas,* and *Complainte de la Seine,* Polydor #522.988.

UBERFALL (Metzner): Open with the first movement of the Sowerby *Symphony for Organ,* DM894. Play this straight through until the fight scene. Here start movement two and play that until the hospital scene, at which time play the last part of side 6, #11-8148-B, the beginning of the Passacaglia. The film will end before the record finishes.

COQUILLE ET CLERGYMAN (Dulac): Open with Kodaly's *Dances from Galanta,* Victor M834, sides 1 and 2 #13786-A and B. Lead directly into the D'Indy *Symphony,* DM943, when the Kodaly changes character. Play the D'Indy *Symphony* in the following order: sides 1-2-3-4-5-6-9-7-8. Break in between sides 2 and 3 for the dance sequence. During this sequence play record 11-8976-A from the Bernstein *Jeremiah Symphony,* DM1026.

DRAME LES FANTOCHES (Cohl): For this short film, play as much as possible of the Jean Francias *Trio,* Columbia X130, #69558-D and 69559-D.
GERTIE THE DINOSAUR (McCay): Play the record *Songfest,* Victor #11-8453.

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SKELETON DANCE (Disney): There are some prints of this without the sound track. Without sound, use the Saint-Saens *Danse Macabre,* Victor #14162-A and B.

RHYTHMUS 21 (Richter): We used the Shostakovitch *Preludes* Levant, Columbia #17335-D (first part only), William Kappel, Victor #11-8824-B.

BERLIN (Ruttmann): Original score by Edmund Meisel but not available. Open with the Fanfare from William Walton's *Facade Suite,* Victor #12034-A. During the train sequence which follows immediately after the opening, play sides 6 and 7 of the Bartok Quartet No. 1 in A minor, M286, #8844-B and 8845-A. With the quiet city in the early morning which we see immediately after the arrival of the train into the city, play Bloch's *Schelomo,* DM698, in its entirety. Follow this up with the remaining portions of the *Facade Suite*. This should take us in the film up to the point where we see a large clock indicating the noon hour. The rest of the film use the Ravel *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales,* Victor #11727-11728, and the Ravel *Alborado del Gracioso,* Victor #8852A and B, interrupted only by the suicide incident at which time play one of the more stormy sections from Schoenberg's *Pierre Lunaire,* Columbia MM461. Return to the Ravel *Waltzes,* and at the theatre sequence, play the *Charleston,* Victor #19727-B. From this point to the end, play popular music such as *Caravan,* Columbia #36120.

FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (Epstein): Open with record side 1 of the Purcell *Suite,* Victor DM533. Be sure to skip the small section of the record which changes character, and take it up again where the music is quiet. Lead directly to side 3 of the Faure *Pelleas et Melisande Suite,* Victor DM941, #11-8349-B. When USHER appears, play side 13 of the Sibelius *Intrada* M446. This should take up to the dinner scene. During the dinner scene and the painting sequence which follows, play sides 1, 2 and 3 of the Schoenberg *Varklarte Nacht,* DM1005. This is broken into by only one sequence — the guitar playing. Here We suggest using a very classical guitar selection such as Bach, or as in this case, the Senz *Caprichio,* Columbia #17076-D. Immediately after the Lady Madeline's death, play the Gregorian Chant recording of the *Dies Irae,* side 5, Victor M177, #11530. Repeat this until the coffin gets in the outside air, and here play the part of side 5 of Rachmaninoff's *Isle of The Dead* which comes immediately after the climax about one inch in on the record, Columbia MM599, #12275-D. Complete the record side and then play side 14 of set M446 (Sibelius *Oak Tree*). This section of the record is repeated until there is a return to the empty palace. Here play the Faure *Elegy,* Victor #14577, and side 1 of the Howell *Elegy,* Columbia #69751-D. This should lead right into the storm beginning at which time start the Arthur Bliss *Music For Strings, sides* 2-4-3, in that order, M464, #12248-B, 12249-B, 12249-A. Repeat these until the fire begins and then play sides 5 and 6 of the Howard Hansen *Nordic Symphony,* DM993, #11-8627-B, 11-8626-B. This will be sufficient to complete the Film.

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ANAEMIC CINEMA (Duchamp): Music for this was played very softly, and the captions were translated into English over the public address system. Music used was the first two sides of the Howard Ferguson *Sonata in F Minor,* HMV C7580, C7581.

GHOSTS BEFORE BREAKFAST (Richter): Original score for this film by Paul Hindemith not available. As a satisfactory substitute, we played Casella's *Tarantella* from *Serenata,* Columbia History of Music Album set 361, #DB1304, followed by Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher,* first part of record side 4 only, M659-4, #15923-B, then back to the Casella *Tarantella* again.

UN CHIEN ANDALOU (Bunuel): It is known that this film was originally shown with the playing of certain selections from Wagner, a fact confirmed by George Anthiel. It seems best to play no music at all with the prologue. After the slitting of the eye, and when the cyclist is first seen, open with the *Liebestod* from Tristan and Isolde. When the Man picks up the two ropes and begins to pull the pianos play sections from *Siegfried's Rhine Journey,* followed by the Funeral March from *Die Gotterdammerung,* which, if synchronized with the mock funeral sequence of the picture, works out quite well. Play the set straight through. Victor DM853.

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There are very few works devoted exclusively to the Avantgarde film, but many excellent considerations exist as parts of more general studies. The following list is only partial, and no attempt has been made to include articles in periodicals — except in one case.

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Clear and unpretentious, this little book still remains one of the best critical discussions of the cinema as an art.

Bardeche, Maurice, & Robert Brasillach. *History of Motion Pictures.* Translated by Iris Barry. New York: Norton; The Museum of Modern Art, 1938.
A broad historical work, examining the contributions to the development of cinema from the leading nations.

Bloem, Walter S. *Soul of the Moving Pictures.* Translated from the German by Allen W. Porterfield. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1924.
An early evaluation of film aesthetics and a valuable insight into the background of Germany's "Golden Period" of film production.

Barry, Iris. *Film Notes.* New York: The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 1939.
These are the program notes for the Film Library's circulating programs, bound into one volume, and representing the only collected research available for a historical and aesthetic study of the most important films from the beginnings of cinematography to the present.

Barry, Iris. In *Art in Our Time.* New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1939.

Barry, Iris. In *Art in Progress.* New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1944.
Both of these surveys contain excellent sections on the work of the Museum's Film Library, with a review of film history, and special sections on George Melies and Leopold Survage.

Barry, Iris. *Cubism and Abstract Art.* New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1936.

Catalogue page 96.

Excellent for a study of the painters who paralleled and influenced the Avantgarde film producers; contains a listing of abstract films.

Benoit-Levy, Jean. *The Art of the Moving Picture*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1946.

This book, by the director of *La Maternelle*, is interesting as a recent discussion of the Cinema.

Deren, Maya. *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form, and Film*. Yonkers: The Alicat Bookshop Press, 1946.

A well-composed work on the nature of art, leading up to the Film as a medium for the creation of a new artistic reality, and offers "a valuable insight into the philosophy and aesthetic that shapes the film outside of Hollywood."

(Arthur Rosenheimer, Jr. in *Theatre Arts*, July 1947.)

Eisenstein, Sergei M. *The Film Sense*. Translated and edited by Jay Leyda. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942.

This book brings the reader close to the intimate, creative side of the great Russian artist; contains his aesthetic philosophy, portions of several scenarios, a list of his work from 1920 to 1942, and a bibliography of his writings.

Freeburg, Victor O. *Art of Photoplay Making*. New York: Macmillan, 1918.

Written almost thirty years ago, this treatise on cinema aesthetics contains one of the most intelligent considerations of treating a scenario as a basis for moving pictorial expression.

Freeburg, Victor O. *Pictorial Beauty on the Screen*. New York: Macmillan, 1923.

This is apparently difficult to find, but sections are unsurpassed.

Faure, Elie. *The Art of Cineplastics*. Boston: The Four Seas Press, 1923. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc.

See page 22.

Hubley, John, and Zachary Schwartz. *The Evolution of The Cartoon*. In *Hollywood Quarterly* #4, 1946. The University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

The best work on the animated cartoon yet written, by the producers of the eminent *Brotherhood of Man*.

Hunter, William. *Scrutiny of Cinema*. London: Wishart, 1932.

An excellent source for detailed information on the leading directors and their work, in the cinema's international historical picture.

Jacobs, Lewis. *The Rise of The American Film* with an introduction by Iris Barry. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1939.

This detailed and very readable work contains, among other things, some of the finest accounts of the early film pioneers—Porter, Melies, etc., and an exhaustive bibliography of books, documents, catalogues, periodicals and special articles up to 1939.

Lejeune, Caroline Alice. *Cinema*. London: Maclehose, 1931.

Contains sympathetic and rich information on almost all the great creative directors of the pre-sound era.

Levy, Julien. *Surrealism*. New York: The Black Sun Press, 1936.

Catalogue page 97.

This is invaluable as a reference for surrealism; contains the complete scenario for *Un Chien Andalou,* by Bunuel and Dali, synopsis of the scenario for their *L'Age D'Or;* the complete text of a projected surrealist film by Joseph Cornell, *Monsieur Phot,* and a fragment from Dali's Baboauo.

Munsterberg, Hugo. *The Photoplay; a psychological study.* New York: Appleton, 1916.

Written by a psychologist, this scholarly study of the film should be read by everyone interested in the medium's psychological properties.

Nilsen, Vladimir. *The Cinema as a Graphic Art.* London: Newnes, 1936.

For a more interesting technical appreciation of the cinematographer's art — particularly as developed by the Russians — this work is unsurpassed.

Read, Herbert. *Art Now.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934.

Not a book on the film, but an introduction to the theory of modern painting and sculpture; provides a superb background for understanding the aesthetic attitude of the Avantgarde.

Rotha, Paul. *The Film Till Now.* London: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930.

Almost a "must" in any study of the film — both from a historical and a theoretical point of view.

Rotha, Paul. *Documentary Film,* with a preface by John Grierson. Boston: American Photographic Publishing Co.; London, Faber, 1936.

A profound study of the documentary film, this work also provides valuable information on the contribution of the Avantgarde.

Rotha, Paul. *Movie Parade:* The Studio Publications, Inc., 1936.

Perhaps the best available collection of representative stills from the most important films in cinema's history.

Seldes, Gilbert V. *An Hour with the Movies and the Talkies.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1929.

Seldes, Gilbert V. *The Movies Come from America.* New York: Scribner's, 1937.

Both of these are healthy primers on a study and appreciation of the film — even though we disagree with many of his minor premises.

Spottswoodie, Raymond J. *A Grammar of the Film.* London: Faber, 1935.

Rather tough sledding for the non-technically minded, but one of the few really scientific analysis of film technique.

Catalogue page 98.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Oskar Fischinger from Richard Foster, 6/8/47

June 8, 1947

Oskar Fischinger
1010 Hammond Street
Hollywood

Dear Mr. Fischinger:

We are terribly sorry that STUDIE #6 didn't get to you sooner—but it is being sent airmail today. I am also sending you a copy of the catalogue under separate cover. Frank and I have been so busy with our own jobs and with the catalogue sales that we have been swamped the past few months. Frank sold his house and is moving to the city this month, so he hasn't been able to get here very often.

Your films have excited many people here, and one of them—Harry Smith, 5 1/2 Panoramic Street, Berkeley—has begun an abstract film to music. Harry is an artist with a background in New Orleans jazz and anthropology, and his work is very exciting. He is using the animation technique that you and Rutmann first used—that of drawing directly on the film. He is using various dies instead of oils, and is making about 1000 feet on 35mm. His first experimental 100 feet we showed at a private showing, and the colors were excellent. He didn't have the music ready for the film, but his idea of the music seems to be a good one; a combination of certain New Orleans jazz and some percussion instrumentation that he recorded himself. He is very interested in drawing a sound track directly on the film and when I told him that you had done it already, he wanted to see you right away. Your new films in color look very exciting on the stills, and both he and I would like very much to see him [them]. Incidently, your article turned out to be one of the best in the catalogue. I have heard nothing but praise for it from everyone. There is decidedly an audience for your things up here.

Speaking of that, Frank and I have decided to try a whirl at commercial distribution of the abstract and surrealist film. We may be able to get a number of outlets, and we would like to distribute your films on a commission basis, if you would like to work with us. Frank and I will try to get down to Hollywood this summer, and if we do, we will come to 1010 Hammond the first thing. Harry Smith would like to meet you; he is a great admirer of your work (as Oscar Wilde said, there is no greater tribute than that of imitation), and I would appreciate it if you would accord him an audience.

Thank you again for your patience with us. We are very anxious to see the new color-sound films you are making. Perhaps we can when we come down to Hollywood.

Sincerely yours,

[Richard Foster]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Herman G. Weinberg from Frank Stauffacher, 6/21/47

21 June 1947

Herman G. Weinberg
Avenue Playhouse
6th Ave. and 47 Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Weinberg,

Please forgive my delay on all counts. A lot of unforseen outside tasks necessitated my temporary abandonment of work on the Art in Cinema activities. I'm now trying to catch up again, and I only hope that this long delay hasn't damaged our former good relationship. First, I wish to say that we will pay you in full for the rental of AUTUMN FIRE by the first of July.

OF THIS CENTURY FILMS, INC.

34 EAST 21st STREET
NEW YORK 10, N. Y.
ALgonquin 4-9197
PLaza 5-9249

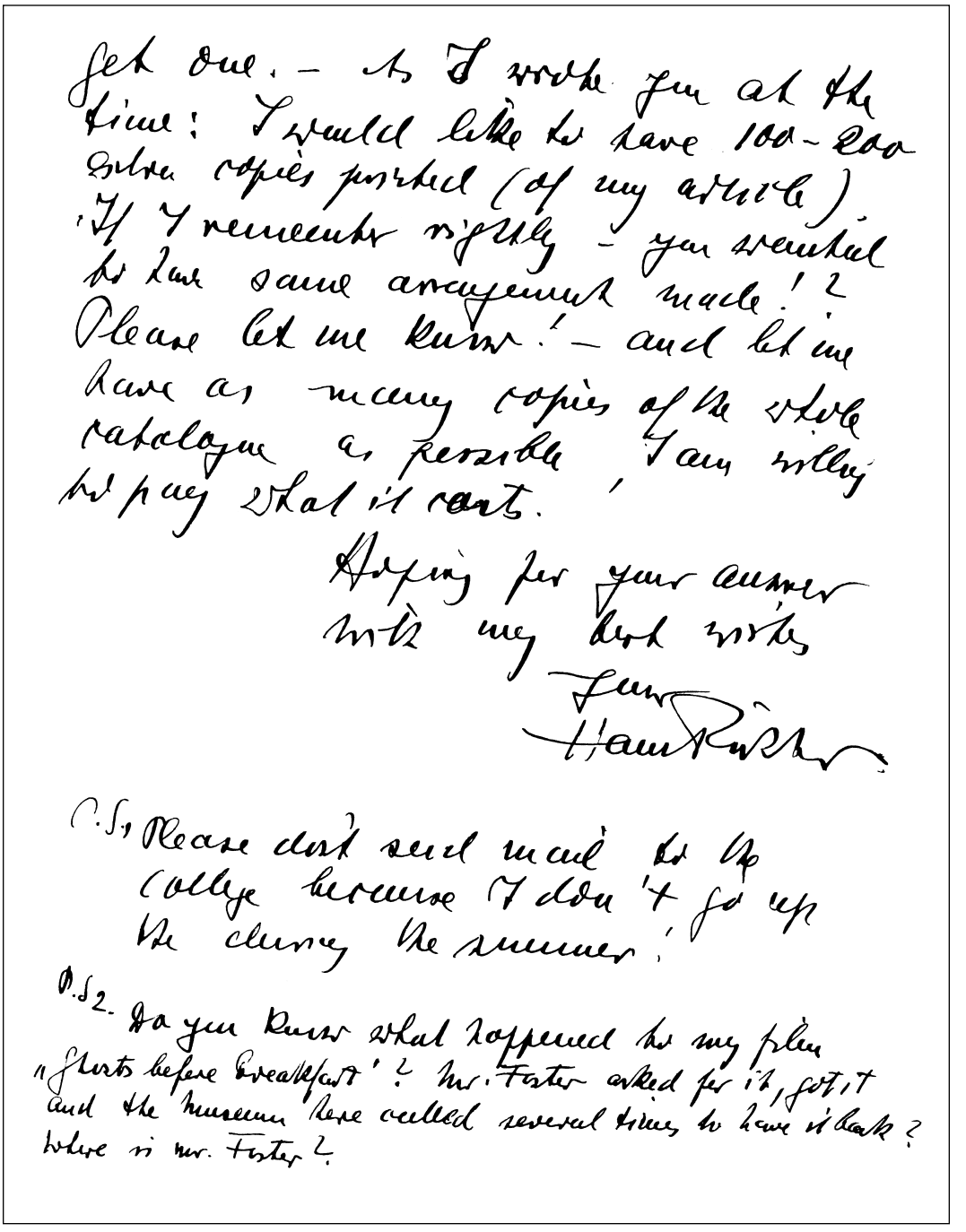
Private address
134 East 60th St

June 18. 47

Dear Mr. Stauffacher! Valerie told me that you would be in New York soon. I shall be very glad to make your personal acquaintance and, what I understand from Valerie, she also thinks that you could be an asset for the East coast. – I worked with her together and I must say that, besides her being an extremely pretty girl, she is 10 times more gifted than the other girls I worked with on the films; so! thank you for the gift!

I hope this letter still reaches you because I sent several copies of the excellent catalogue you made – but didn't

Illustration 11. Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Hans Richter, 6/18/47, soon after publication of the *Art in Cinema* catalogue. Courtesy of Ursula Richter Lawder


Sehr due. – As I wrote you at the time: I would like to have 100–200 extra copies printed (of my article). If I remember rightly – you wanted to have same arrangement made? 2 Please let me know! – and let me have as many copies of the stock catalogue as possible. I am willing to pay what it cost.

Hoping for your answer with my best wishes

Yours

Hans Richter

P.S. Please don't send mail to the College because I don't go up the country the summer!

P.S 2. Do you know what happened to my film "Ghosts before Breakfast"? Mr. Foster asked for it, got it and the museum here called several times to have it back? Where is mr. Foster?

Illustration 11. *Continued.*

Illustration 12. Harry Smith in 1950 in front of his "Brain Drawings." Photographer unknown. Courtesy Harry Smith Archives (www.harrysmitharchives.com).

This last series of Art in Cinema didn't go as smoothly as the first series. We had a large and interested audience at all times, but on the whole, the standard of films was not as high, and we suddenly came face to face with the fact that there are not very many really good experimental films from which to draw indefinitely. This, in spite of the fact that we had rented just about every thing we could get—even stuff we didn't have room for on five nights of showing. When we started to receive the films, it developed into an avalanche, and there was considerable re-scheduling of the original programs. We even had smaller groups to see films not included on the Friday night showings—these were shown under better conditions, in a rented pre-view theatre, during the week.

Our facilities for showing films here at the Museum are not the best. We have two Bell and Howell Filmosounds "Master" models, with 4 inch lenses, and 1000 watt lamps, and this is just a little too weak for our throw which is about 180 feet. It is adequate, but a bum print doesn't look like anything at all, and your print of AUTUMN FIRE seemed hazy enough—for some reason—not to show up very well, and so we thought it best to run it for the smaller group. And as to their reaction, it was very well received, particularly by those who are trying to make films themselves, and who appreciate a good job of cutting. It was a very charming bit of poetry, and thanks very much for making it available to us.

As for the catalogue, I won't make apologies for it, although I could find about a hundred. We didn't have time to issue an "errata"—it could stand one. Nevertheless, we're glad to see it out finally, in spite of all this, and hope some day to be able to do a really definitive job of the same subject. The trouble is that we were learning more and more all along, so that now we would like to rewrite and revise the entire job.

Thanking you again for all of your help and advice, and for AUTUMN FIRE, I am,

sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Oskar Fischinger from Harry Smith, 7/25/47

July 25, 1947

Dear Mr. Fischinger;

I am writing you, first of all, to thank you for the time and information that you gave to me when I was in Los Angelas a few weeks ago. It was a very great pleasure to be able to talk to you, as there are so few people who know anything about the abstract film, and there are certainly none, other than yourself, who have more than just scratched the surface of the medium. After I left Hollywood I thought of a great many other things that I would like to have asked you about, and I hope that the next time that I am in Los Angelas, which will probably be in two weeks or so, that it will be possible for me to talk with you again.

I am also writing to find out if it is going to be possible for us to borrow your latest films for showing in our October series. Will you have finished work on them by that time? We are naturally very anxious to show them as quite a number of people have asked us if we were going to be showing any more of your productions, and I believe that you allready know how enthusiastic the audience was over the ones that we have allready shown.

I have written to film libraries in France, England, and Switzerland, in the hope that prints of the Ruttmann films can be located. I will let you know if we are able to find them.

Also, how long does the place that you had your sixteen millimeter copies made take to do the work? I will not have my own film ready for reduction before the end of next month. Do you think that they can get it done within a month and a half of that time?

Please give my very best wishes to Mrs. Fischinger, and to your children. I hope that I will have the pleasure of meeting them next time I am in Hollywood.

Sincerely yours,

Harry E. Smith
Art in Cinema Society
San Francisco Museum of Art.

Reprinted courtesy of the Harry Smith Archives.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Kenneth Anger, 7/25/47

July 25, 1947

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

Last May I sent you a print of my experimental film ESCAPE EPISODE for review by the Art in Cinema committee, in regard to its possible inclusion in the fall series of experimental films at the Museum. You included a short note with the film when you returned it to me but other than that I have received no statement from you. I had hoped for some critical evaluation on your part, but undoubtedly you have been very busy. Mr. Eli Willis has informed me that you are now formulating your program for the fall series, and has advised me to contact you again.

At the time you reviewed the film only a work print was available, and I requested that you return the print as soon as possible, as it was needed in work on the sound recording. If you should care to review it again, a new print has been made, and you can keep it for as long as you feel necessary.

I have recently completed a new experimental film, FIREWORKS, which runs 16 minutes, and I could send this film for review with ESCAPE EPISODE.

I am including a list of my creative film projects, with a brief statement about each. Should you care to review any of the earlier films, I would be glad to arrange it with you, or I could supply you with stills from these films.

Jim Whitney has recently told me of the possibility of a distributing agency for experimental films being arranged through the Art in Cinema Society. There is certainly a growing need for such an agency and I personally would like to see it come about. It would be an important step and I wish you success on the project.

I am very interested in hearing of developments on this matter, and of your plans for the forthcoming film series. I will be looking forward to hearing from you in regard to my films.

Yours very sincerely,

Kenneth Anger *[hw]*

CREATIVE FILMS BY KENNETH ANGER

1941 WHO HAS BEEN ROCKING MY DREAM BOAT (9 minutes)
Completed in the fall of 1941, and named after a popular song of that year. An investigation into rhythm and dogma, in which the tempos of amusements acquire the images of violence. A film of adolescents faced with the fact of war.

1942 STRUGGLES IN THE ABYSMS (5 minutes)
A film in which reality is rejected for the formalisms of the unconscious. The sleeper is drugged and carried into underground regions, where in a dungeon he discovers the bones of his lost friends. He is saved from the monsters that approach by a princess, who opens a trapdoor. However, an intrigue develops and he is thrust back to the fate of his martyred friends.

1943 HETERAXIS (10 minutes)
This film is concerned with image relationship. Squadrons of boys and girls perform exercises, seemingly for a mass excursion into sex. The girls are escorted into a hospital, where lunatics run through the halls and mothers have hysteria. The nurses, however, object before we can see more.

1944 THE NEST (20 minutes)
A film of family life. The situation is made intimate in this case by the lovers being brother and sister, their movements being confined to the home. The film participates with the brother, while the sister represents a more honest type of love. The brother, the embodyment of the last puritan, is led in his frantic search for innocence to destroy the sister and the home. A pistol shot and the gates of heaven announce the triumph of righteousness.

1945 DRASTIC DEMISE (9 minutes)
This film was my reaction to the Hollywood V-J Day crowds. The camera is propelled through the mobs, jostled and pointed at. These scenes were developed and projected in the negative. Then at the end is spliced a positive image: the atom bomb exploding at Bikini.

1946 ESCAPE EPISODE (33 minutes)
ESCAPE EPISODE and THE NEST are my two films dealing with sex morality. In both films the assailers of honesty have placed themselves in the role of saint or prophet.

1947 FIREWORKS (16 minutes)
Formally this film is an investigation of the shock-image, a configuration that extends to the subject matter. It concerns that love which is at once beyond society and with which no compromise is possible—the subject of all great tragedy. The young man is an

'outcast'—the 'wild beast' who is tracked down through the night. His vision precludes his acceptance even by his own minority group. The doubt of this love leads to the fall into promiscuity and the loss of identity thereby—the final pose, a useless ornament. The cause of the doubt is revealed—a sense of destiny that lusts after the romantic, an ill-starred sense of the grandeur of catastrophe.

PROPOSED FILMS

I am now engaged in the filming of ERA-HOLLYWOOD, a color film about a subjective experience in the Hollywood of Summer and Fall, 1929. The filming should be completed by September.

Other film projects include INTERFORM, one of a series of planned studies relating physiognomy, the life-cycle and line drawings of structure; THE RED LAMP CAFE, a color-experiment in the macabre; and SOUTH SHORE, a projection of the battle of the unconscious precipitated through set heroisms on the part of society.

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Kenneth Anger from Harry Smith, 7/28/47

July 28, 1947

Kenneth Anger
2021 Holly Drive
Hollywood 28 California

Dear Kenneth:

I am taking the liberty of answering your letter of the 25th to Frank Stauffacher. Frank is not going to be here for a couple of days, and as we are extremely interested in your work, I am writing at this time. Would it be possible for you to send up all of your work for previewing on next Saturday? We are going to be looking at a number of films at that time for program selection, all of which has to be done by the first week in August. We are most anxious to see all of your earlier films, as well as the FIREWORKS, of which we have heard many enthusiastic reports. Eli Willis and Jim Whitney have both had very exciting things to say about it. If you can get your films off to us Express Collect at once I am sure that they will get here in time.

As Jim Whitney told you, we are going to be acting as a distributing agency for experimental films. We are going to have the works of the Whitneys, Fischinger, Arledge, and a number of others, and would like very much to be able to add your productions to our catalogue. If you are at all interested, let us know as soon as you can what rates you would consider, and also if you have any prints on hand that we could use or if ones would have to be made up.

We are very anxious to learn of any work that you are doing now, or may be doing in the future, as well as learning of anyone else who is working along lines similar to your own. Please let us know of any new developments as they happen.

Yours very Sincerly,

Harry E. Smith
Art in Cinema Society
San Francisco Museum of Art.

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Harry Smith from William Howe, 7/31/47

Amateur Cinema League, Inc.
420 Lexington Avenue
New York 17, N.Y.
[. . .]

July 31, 1947

Mr. Harry E. Smith
San Francisco Museum of Art
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Smith:

In reply to your letter of July 27, we will be glad to book you for the Film Library print of "Motion" for your screening on October 31.

The film runs 400 feet of 16mm Kodachrome. It was produced by Henry E. Hird, FACL, of Ridgewood, N.J.

The review of "Motion," in the December, 1946, issue of MOVIE MAKERS, reads in part: "Henry E. Hird … has chosen in his present offering to illustrate one of the cine film's most interesting capacities—its power to analyze motion. … Mr. Hird has observed and recorded with cinematic sureness such things as what happens when cream is poured into a cup of coffee and is filmed in such a manner that the action is greatly slowed down for careful analysis. We watch the mechanics of flying seagulls, in landings and takeoffs. We look at the manner in which crystals are formed from chemical combinations, as well as at opening flowers, by time lapse filming. Smoke rings are shown and there are fine examples of the familiar dives caught in slow motion. Mr. Hird's picture compares favorably with the best slow motion studies of the professional screen, and it presents a number of fresh subjects."

We would be glad to send you other films; but actually, we have few prints that would be of any interest to the type of audience which your screenings draw. Nearly all of our library films are personalized travel pictures or unpretentious family photoplays that serve as good examples to other amateur filmers, but have little to do with the experimental or the development of the motion picture as an art form.

However, we shall be glad to put you in touch with anyone who comes up with a film that might be of interest to you.

Cordially,

Wm. Howe *[hw]*
William Howe

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Harry Smith from Kenneth Anger, 7/31/47

[. . .]

July 31, 1947

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am replying to your letter requesting my films for previewing by your Society this weekend. Unfortunately I could not supply you with my complete work on such a short notice. However, I dispatched immediately the footage available—the work prints for ESCAPE EPISODE and FIREWORKS. Films I–IV are tied up at the duplicating laboratories; DRASTIC DEMISE and the new print of ESCAPE EPISODE haven't been returned to me yet from New York, where they were requested for

review by a television company. I can't guarantee these films will be available by next week, the deadline you mentioned.

Up to now the production of films has always held precedence over proper prints and extra laboratory work, which had to be regarded as expensive refinements. Now that there is an opportunity for a wider reception of these films this work will be carried out.

I resurrected the old work print of ESCAPE EPISODE with reluctance. I had hoped it had been laid aside for good, a much deserved interrment, but if you bear with it I suppose its frayed lengths can yield one more projection. Keep in mind that the new print has light value corrections and is free of splice jumps and other annoyances.

In both ESCAPE EPISODE and FIREWORKS the sound band is of vital importance. The young composer working with me on this has done in my opinion a superlative job, but we are faced with difficult technical and financial problems. I sincerely hope the track can be turned out in time for the October showing, but I'm not sure this will be possible without some outside assistance. I would appreciate the return of the films as soon as you have finished reviewing them, as the print of FIREWORKS is needed for timing.

If you decide to include ESCAPE EPISODE and FIREWORKS in your fall showings, I would like the films preceded by DRASTIC DEMISE, which is a quite short film.

Frankly, it is going to be quite difficult to finance new prints for these films. I'd appreciate any suggestions.

ERA-HOLLYWOOD has been cast, rehearsed, and camera-tested, though production will be held up until color-film can be afforded. (I feel it picturesque to confess that my early films were financed through the sale of my brother's outgrown stamp hobby)

So I welcome your distribution plans, and hope you will handle my works if it is possible. I feel the rates will have to be decided upon with the individual films. If you are trying to establish some consistency in rates among the contributors, please let me know. As I understand it, it is not a question of exclusive rights but that you will handle a number of prints which will be placed at your disposal, with the artist receiving a proportion of the rental. I would like the details when they have been arrived at.

If I hear of anyone else working in experimental film I will let you know. I believe you know of Curtis Harrington. Curtis has corresponded with Mr. Stauffacher, and sent him his completed film for review earlier in the year.

Thank you very much, Mr. Smith, for contacting me and the interest shown in your letter. I would be interested in any personal criticism you might have of my work, as well as the reaction of the group. Best of luck for the plans of the Art in Cinema Society.

Yours truly,

Kenneth Anger *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Kenneth Anger.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Miss Bullitt from Hans Richter, 8/14/47 *[hw]*

Dear Miss Bullitt;

Thank you for your letter.

I was supposed to have "The movies take a holiday"—an Anthology of the Avantgarde—ready for fall. But I have not—because of the work on "Dreams …" [*Dreams That Money Can Buy*]. It contains 3 films of mine (besides "Vormittagspuk") but I hesitate to take it out of this Anthology, because we want to rent it as a <u>whole</u> and when we have shown most of the stuff already, nobody would rent it.—

Believe me that I wish to help you in your venture (which the museum of mod art here, has neglected all the way through), but I shall not be able to do anything before I sure have a contract with

the distributer (or one distributer). I have an offer for "Dreams …" but the man is now in Europe and comes back after Labor-Day.

I remember 2 people who should be shown: one is Dwinell Grant. 280 Riverside Drive, N.Y.C. The other is Norman MacLaren Canadian Film Board. Ottawa—Canada. They have both made "Avant-garde-Films"—There is also a film "Easter Island" a documentary by John Ferno, which is very "realistic" and a good work of the school of Joris Ivens, work to be shown in your showings (adress John Ferno 28 East 10th st N.Y.C.) and Luis Bunuel's "Land without bread" one of the greatest documentary films ever made. (museum of mod. art). Bunuel is in Mexico. Sorry—not being able to help you more at the moment.

[unreadable] after Labor day. My best to mr Stauffacher.

Sincerely yours

HRichter

Reprinted by permission of Ursula Richter.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Art in Cinema from Amos Vogel, 9/7/47

Amos Vogelbaum
125 East 17 Street
New York 3, N.Y.

Sep. 7th, 1947

Art in Cinema Society
Civic Center
San Francisco, Calif.

Gentlemen:

Enclosed please find check for $2.25 for which you are to send me your "Art in Cinema" catalog.

We wonder if you could send us detailed information on where and how we can obtain some of the excellent pictures listed in your catalogue. We are planning a series of showings before our local film group in the near future and are especially interested in serious documentary, educational and scientific films, as well as experimental and "art" classics.

Perhaps you can also let us know where such recent 16mm films as "The Potted Psalm" and "Fragment of Seeking" are obtainable for rental or sale.

To determine our own policy, we should like to enquire how you take care of expenses for rentals and staff in your Film Society. We can see no other way but to charge admission at our showings.

Your cooperation in answering the above questions will help advance our common goal of advancing the appreciation of films as a medium of art.

May we hear from you soon?

Very sincerely,

Amos Vogelbaum *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Amos Vogel.

[Amos Vogelbaum changed his name to Amos Vogel in 1947. Of course, Vogel's "local film group" became Cinema 16.]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Amos Vogel from Frank Stauffacher, 9/13/47

Sept. 13, 1947

Amos Vogelbaum
125 East 17th Street
New York 3, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Vogelbaum,

Thank you very much for your Art in Cinema catalogue order. It will be sent to you in a few days under seperate cover.

All of the films treated in the catalogue have their sources, together with the addresses, listed on page 99 in the catalogue. However, since it was printed, we have further investigated the field, and have found considerably more.

Of course you must be familiar with the opportunities offered for film society showings by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library in N.Y. These films have been the basis for all of our showings—supplemented with additional material as we came across it from time to time. Our "Art in Cinema" series have always had one purpose in mind: To seek out and investigate those films which experimented with cinema as an art form. The boundaries of this category are rather vague and at the same time, quite limited. For example, while all documentary films would not fall into this sphere, some few most certainly do, since they are experiments with a new medium, as well as being documents. It is a difficult category to define with exactness. For this reason we've had an exhaustive job of combing all available film libraries for an "attitude," more than for subject matter.

Naturally we have always had to charge admission—but on a subscription basis only, since many of the films—those from the Museum of Modern Art in particular—must be shown on a non-commercial basis, i.e., no door admissions, no one-night tickets. The subscription manages to well cover all expenses, and the surplus proceeds have been used to finance individual experimenters who might have little other source of income.

At the present time we are preparing a small rental library of films for group showings, consisting of: the abstract experiments of John and James Whitney, the work of Oskar Fischinger, THE POTTED PSALM, THE CAGE, both by Sidney Peterson, INTROSPECTION by Sara Kathryn Arledge, and some few others of a purely experimental character. FRAGMENT OF SEEKING may be obtained for showing from its producer, Mr. Curtis Harrington, 2106 North Las Palmas, Hollywood 28, Calif.

We would be happy to aid you in any way possible. Do not hesitate to write further.

Sincerely yours,

Stauf *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Harry Smith from Jim Davis, 9/14/47 *[hw]*

30 Nassau St.
Princeton, N.J.

Sep. 14-47

Dear Mr. Smith:—

Thank you for your letter of Sep. 12th. I will send my film to you express collect as you suggested. You can run thru it & see whether you think it is worth showing. It's really just a record of how my use of illuminated transparent plastics developed out of paintings in which the chief interest is motion.

Since the film has no sound track it needs music with it—any kind would be better than nothing. Would it be possible to play records when showing it. Perhaps I could have a disc made—with some Edgar Varese or John Cage music—& send it to you to use with it. Or would I get involved in copyright trouble over that. I don't know about such things. Perhaps you could advise me or give me some suggestions as to how musical accompaniement would be provided for the film.

I will send the film to you this week—but don't say I didn't warn you—and my feelings will not be hurt if you decide not to use it. I am now working on a new film which begins where the present one leaves off. I hope it will be completed satisfactorily—

Sincerely yours

James E. Davis *[hw]*

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Third Series, 9/47

The Art in Cinema Society of The San Francisco Museum of Art presents
Five Friday nights at eight o'clock

ART IN CINEMA series three

October 10

Naissance du Cinema (French). Study of early experiments in animation by Emile Reynaud.
*__Early Studies__ (American 1941) by James Whitney.
*__The Cage__ (American 1947). Produced by students of the California School of Fine Arts directed by Sidney Peterson; photography by Hy Hirsch.
Variety (German 1926) directed by E. A. Dupont with Emil Jannings.

October 17

Hands (German 1929). A film ballet of hands directed by Miklos Bandy.
Mars (American 1946). An imaginary visualization of the Red Planet by Reginald McMahon.
Kameradschaft (German 1931). A powerful and beautiful essay in realism directed by G. W. Pabst.
Oskar Fischinger's latest work.

October 24

Flat Hatting (American 1944) by John Hubley and Phil Eastman.
*__Horror Dream__ (American 1947). Dance designed by Marian van Tuyl with an original score by John Cage; directed by Sidney Peterson; photography Hy Hirsch.
*__Absolute Films No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4__ (American 1947). Color animation by Harry Smith.
Dream of a Rarebit Fiend (American 1906). Imaginative manipulations of camera devices by Edwin S. Porter.
The Navigator (American 1924). Directed by Donald Crisp with Buster Keaton.

October 31

Motion (American 1945–46. Courtesy Amateur Cinema League, Inc.) by Henry E. Hird.
Le Retour A La Raison (French 1923). Man Ray's first film, made overnight for a Dadaist soiree.
*__All the News__ (American 1947). Psychological exposition of a mind caught in today's headlines, by Joseph Vogel.
*__Transmutation__ (American 1947). Black and white animation by Jordan Belson.
Metropolis (German 1925). Imaginary prophecy directed by Fritz Lang.

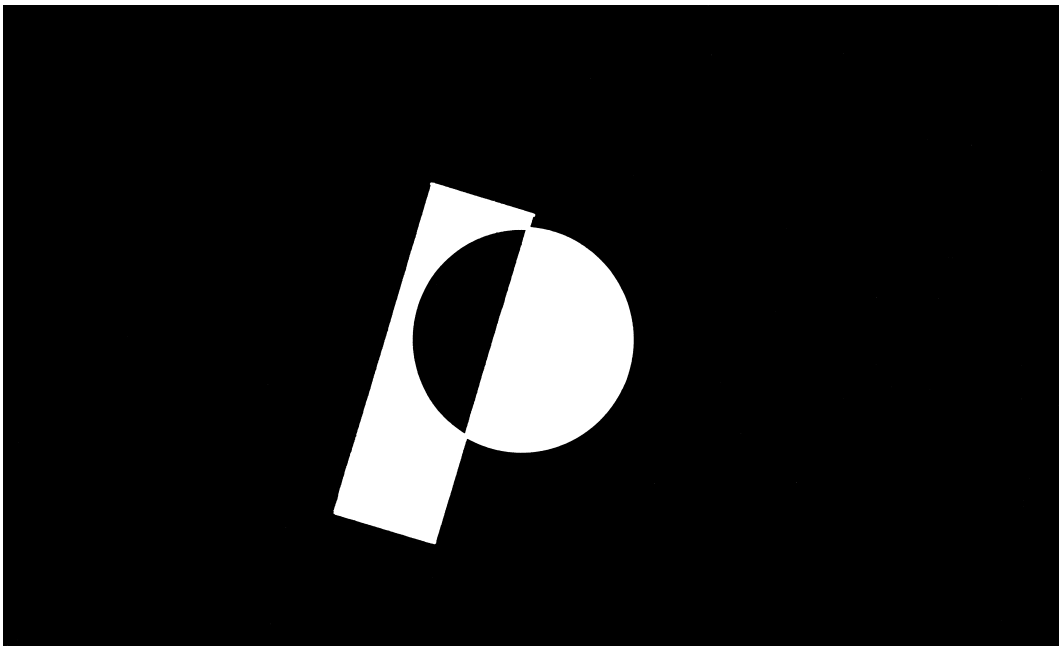

Illustration 13. Master matrix for the Whitney Brothers' *Twenty-four Variations* (1939). Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

November 7

Symphonie Diagonale (German 1919). Viking Eggeling's historic achievement in the abstract film.

Rain (Dutch 1929). Lyrical interpretation of a rainstorm by Joris Ivens and Mannus Franken.

*__Meta__ (American 1947). Abstractions in color by Robert Howard.

*__Latest Studies__ by John and James Whitney.

Escape Episode (American 1946). An experimental study of morality by Kenneth Anger.

*__Suite #2__ (American 1947). Color abstractions by Hal McCormick with technical assistance by Albert Hofflich.

The Puritan (French 1939). Brilliant case-study in abnormal psychology. Directed by Liam O'Flaherty with Jean-Louis Barrault.

*Films marked with an asterisk are premiere showings.

Series Three of Art in Cinema presents, in addition to a wide variety of general Avant-garde material, nine premiere screenings of contemporary experimental work. Half of these experiments have been made in the San Francisco Bay Area during the past year, directly stimulated by the potentialities of film as art, as discovered through the previous showings of the Art in Cinema Society. While the feature length films on this series are in marked contrast to the shorter experimental studies by reason of being heavily financed studio productions, their importance lies in their full application of bold experimental methods.

NOTE: These films have been difficult to procure and have been drawn from many widely separated sources. We ask your indulgence when programs must be changed due to circumstances beyond our control.

This series is organized on a non-profit basis with admission by series subscriptions only.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Curtis Harrington from Frank Stauffacher, 9/15/47

15 Sept. 1947

Curtis Harrington
2106 North Las Palmas
Hollywood 28

Dear Mr. Harrington,

Please forgive us for ommitting FRAGMENT OF SEEKING on the announcements. We found ourselves with too many films, and as usual, trouble in organizing satisfactory, well-balanced programs since the fragmentary nature of most of the shorter things is difficult to place without having them all here at one time when the programs are planned. And we naturally havn't even seen most of them yet. By the time the first program comes up we usually have to juggle things around and issue a revised listing. We took your film off of the Oct 17 program because of lack of time, and we couldn't book the things now there on any other date. I don't want to put it with Anger's ESCAPE EPISODE because the pace is pretty much the same, and with THE PURITAN, would make a top-heavy evening. So that leaves the 24th or the 31st. And I'm afraid of the 31st because there's already too much on it. But it would be good for the 24th, if its ready. All this I was going to write you, but you caught me first.

I would be most happy to get some stills from your film for a gallery show I'm trying to get together to run concurrently with the films. In your letter to Miss Bullitt you mentioned having some. The wall-show will contain stills and related graphic and descriptive material on current experimental cinema. If you can send a few—four or five, perhaps—I'd appreciate getting them as soon as possible as the show should be organized within the next week or so.

If the 24th is unsatisfactory for you, send it up for the 31st—or, I may be wrong, and we might yet put it on Nov. 7.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher *[hw]*
Frank Stauffacher

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Curtis Harrington, 9/24/47

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

As far as I can see at the moment, FRAGMENT OF SEEKING should be available in time to add it to your program of October 24th. If not, then certainly by the 31st, although I shall try my best to have it up to you by the 24th.

I sent four stills to you yesterday, and hope that you will be able to use them. Although two of them are quite good (as 16mm frame enlargements go) one suffers from excessive graininess and the other is rather badly scratched. However, seen from a slight distance …… I have absolutely no control over the photography shop that does the blow-ups for me so I can't caution them to handle the negatives carefully, etc. And for some odd reason it seems to be the only place in town that will even look at a 16mm negative with the thought of making a still enlargement from it.

I notice on your Series Three announcement that you credit Liam O'Flaherty with the direction of THE PURITAN. Mr. O'Flaherty wrote the story—the film was the first directorial effort of Jeff Musso, who, I believe, also wrote the musical score for the film. Also, the film was made in 1937.

The other day I received a letter inquiring about the availability of my film from Amos Vogelbaum [Amos Vogel, who was in the process of starting Cinema 16], who said you referred me to him. Am

curious to know what sort of a "film group" he represents and any other information you may have about him. Let me know, if possible.

Yours sincerely

Curtis Harrington *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Curtis Harrington.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Conversation with Jordan Belson, 7/22/00

Scott MacDonald: Did you go to any of the Art in Cinema programs?

Jordan Belson: Every one of them.

MacDonald: Really?

Belson: Yes. It was a very important factor in my creative life. I turned to making films almost immediately after seeing *Rhythmus 21* there [*Rhythmus 21* was shown on October 25, 1946]. Richter's film showed me that there was a place for non-objective art in film-making. And what Richter did to make that film seemed simple enough, I suppose, that I thought I could do it too.

Also, Norman McLaren really turned me on. Art in Cinema showed the hand-painted McLarens [*Five for Four* (1942) and *Hen Hop* (1942) were shown on October 10, 1947] and the other McLarens as well, the illustrated folk-songs [selections from the *Chants Populaires* series (McLaren's contributions were *C'est l'aviron*, 1944; and *La-haut sur ces montagnes*, 1945) were shown on October 25, 1946]. I was very interested in following McLaren's career. After seeing one of the hand-painted films, I asked Frank if I could take a look at the film itself. I was curious about the tricks McLaren used. Frank let me come back into the editing space he had, and I rolled the film out and studied it.

McLaren was, I learned fairly recently, closely involved with the Museum of Non-Objective Painting and Hilla Rebay, though you wouldn't think so from some of the films he made. Her biography, *Hilla Rebay: In Search of the Spirit in Art* by Joan M. Lukach [New York: George Braziller, 1983], talks about film to some extent, and how she gave money to the Whitney brothers and Fischinger, and, of course, to Harry Smith and myself. And McLaren. I recommend the book; Rebay was a key figure.

MacDonald: Do you think Harry Smith also got the idea of working directly on the film-strip from Art in Cinema?

Illustration 14. Rare (damaged) photograph of Jordan Belson, circa 1945. Courtesy Jordan Belson.

Illustration 15. Filmstrip from an early version of Norman McLaren's *Loops* (1952). Courtesy National Film Board of Canada. © National Film Board of Canada. All Rights Reserved.

Belson: Well, *I* believe so. I've been reading some stuff about Harry's life, and he consistently claimed that he had made films up in Washington State *before* he came to Berkeley. He claims to have started making films that way when he was 13 or 14 years old, but *I* never saw anything like that, and he never mentioned anything like that when I knew him—and I knew him well. My sense was that we went there together and discovered new ways of making films.

It seems to be important to people to establish being first at something, or having started it before anybody else or whatever, but I never felt that Smith's claim to being first was the truth, just one of his made-up stories like that his mother was Anastasia, or that his real father was Aleister Crowley.

In spite of the fact that McLaren's work was a turn on for me, my first efforts at making films were just hand painting shapes on index cards and then on scrolls (which was a similar technique to painting on film, except much larger with much more room, allowing for a greater variety of materials and techniques).

Frank Stauffacher was a very kind, patient, and generous person. He helped me get started—and not just by creating Art in Cinema, which *was* very important. At the beginning, I did my drawings on cards and Frank would come over and photograph them with his camera, because I didn't have one.

MacDonald: What do you remember about being in the audience at Art in Cinema?

Belson: Well, you know, Art in Cinema was in the art museum, in the central courtyard—a big circular space with a glass ceiling over it, which they made a big effort to cover (the effort wasn't always successful). It was definitely an *art* experience. They did have a real projection booth hidden away. You had to go up a very rickety spiral staircase, way up high.

MacDonald: Who projected?

Belson: They had a professional projectionist.

MacDonald: How serious did Stauffacher seem to be about having the projection done well?

Belson: Very serious. They were good programs, and there was nothing amateurish about the presentation. Frank was thoroughly competent within the limits of the kind of films that were available. A lot of them were pretty beat up. Most of the earlier stuff he showed came from the Museum of Modern Art in New York—the European films, *An Andalusian Dog* [1929] and the others.

There were fold-up chairs that were removed when there was no show. The space was used for other things as well. There were curtains around the perimeter to keep the light and sound in, or out.

It was a prestigious place for the series and created a lot of ambiance. It gave Art in Cinema an aura of acceptability and glamour.

Quite a number of artists got turned on by Art in Cinema, not just Harry and me. Frank did show new artists' work, especially if they were local and serious.

MacDonald: Sometimes it seems from the letters as if people made films *because* Art in Cinema had created an audience for them.

Belson: Yes, if that outlet had not been there, there wouldn't have been any incentive to make films. Might as well paint.

Also, I suppose a lot of my feeling about the *place* of films like mine in the larger society were based upon my experience at Art in Cinema. Frank would usually show some lengthier work, a feature, as the main part of the program and use the Fischingers, McLarens, and Belsons as shorts,

almost the way cartoons were used in regular movie theaters. For years I've thought of my films as being shown only in those circumstances.

It's only in the last ten or fifteen years that I've begun to think of films differently. The advent of videotape allowed me to think of making longer work. I don't think there would have been a place for a work like *Mysterious Journey* [1997], which is thirty minutes long, in the Art in Cinema type of program. Now, it might work in a theater, as apparently it did when you showed it in Berkeley [at the Pacific Film Archive, July 21, 1998], but even that's relatively new.

MacDonald: Was the Art in Cinema audience quiet or rowdy?

Belson: Perfectly respectable. There *was* a lot of excitement. There were always people there you knew, people from the art world around here. There was a lot of arranging where to sit and who to sit with, and lots of talking out in the lobby.

MacDonald: Did that continue after the films?

Belson: Before, during the intermission, and afterwards as well. You had to take an elevator to get up to the right floor—which was a little creepy; there was a mental case running the elevator—and we were always amused by that. There was also a long staircase you could take, and a lot of running up and down the stairs. Art in Cinema was generally a reason to get together with friends and do something afterwards. It was a social event as well as an artistic experience. It was important to many of us for years.

In the mid-1950s I remember seeing Frank sitting with his wife, Barbara, down by the Bay on the Marina Green. They were having a picnic. Frank had a bandage over his entire head and face. He'd just had surgery for removing a tumor in his brain. It didn't seem to cure him for very long because he died shortly thereafter. It was a very touching scene, and I sat down and had a chat with Frank, probably the best chat I ever had with him, although physically he could hardly talk. That's my last recollection of him, and of Art in Cinema.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Elwood Decker, 5/48 *[hw]*

May, 1948

Frank Stauffacher
San Francisco Museum of Art,

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

Thank you for a thrill … the first out-of-town request for information concerning my first film, "Light Modulators."

According to Acme lab it is 495 feet in length. At present it is a silent version, but an attempt is being made to synchronize some Japanese music with it. The rental fee would then be $5 a day.

I'm still trying to describe the film to myself—in relation to the other 2 reels that are planned to go with it, eventually.

I'm glad you have an unusual interest in the experimental film. It is comforting.

At first it was all very simple, "light modulator" meant an object, a thin object bent in various directions to modulate light reflection. At first I pinned one on the wall & moved my camera from one aspect of the design to the other. Some parts dangled, so we moved them with a fan. Another was made like a flying fish only more abstract. It was drawn through the air against the pressure of air from the fan. Double exposure mildly varied the effects. Then forms were suspended & turned, lowered & raised. Different lens were used, the exposures were varied. The light modulators were photographed from above & below, close & far away. Forms were made of construction paper, (brightly colored) highly reflective tin, transparent plastic, wire, aluminum & copper. Effects were combined. The war-surplus film used was occasionally light-struck & added effects of its own. Acme Lab at first "decided they couldn't do anything with it," but they did. It's chaotic, but it was fun to make it. All I could possibly splice onto a so called 400 foot reel determined the end of the film. It was shown at M.S.C. during the evening devoted to experimental film during their 1st

annual Festival of Contemporary Art. I squirmed in my seat, during the last third of the picture where I had been too reluctant to throw away the better exposures of that 200 feet of Ansco film that had been used along with the 1000, or so, feet of war-surplus. So the film is now being slightly revised as a print is prepared for sound. The dupe negative & original are being altered with a few superimpositions, but the 1st print is being kept intact for a record.

While waiting for the processor to get a new printer something else has happened to me. It seemed a good time to think over the idea of the whole film, of which, the 1st reel was to be merely a feeler. As I began to think about it, the modulation of light shifted from object to appearance, from direct to indirect appearance, & from indirect appearance to the only factor that can adequately control it, consciousness. So here I am all full of consciousness, Mr. Stauffacher—but my wife just came in & insisted I take a nap, if you want to hear more, let me know. So long.

Cordially yours,

Elwood Decker

1311 N. Laurel Ave
Hollywood 46, Calif.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Elwood Decker, 6/48 *[hw]*

June

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

Thank you for wanting the film. You can have it in advance of your showing date. I'm delighted about your willingness to show it because I have friends in San Francisco & lived there for about 8 years. Went to grammar & high school across the bay. Knew Sidney Peterson quite well in High school. He was of a surrealist temperament even then. For a couple of years he was out of school, & read sour German philosophers & loved the biting satire of Goya's "Los Caprichos," Daumier & Forain. Two years in bed transformed him from a normal boy into an intellectual, but of a rebellious disposition. I'll never forget that pale ironical face, but I liked him. His vivid intellectual interest made my other companions seem like so many healthy rabbits. He helped me search behind the physical appearance & I think he can do the same for others. Later in San Francisco he had his first exhibition at my studio on Golden Gate avenue, attended by the poet George Sterling & friends of Telegraph Hill.

Another cinema experimenter, Robert Howard is an old friend of mine. Perhaps he could persuade his brother Charles to make an abstract film?

I loved your book "Art in Cinema"! Please let me know if your comedy is shown in L.A. so I can have the pleasure of seeing it. I met Dr. Morley once, through Miss Agnes Pash [?], a mutual friend. She suggested I submit some black & whites to one of their shows but I never. My only training was a year at the old California School of Fine Arts on California Street [the California School of Fine Arts became the San Francisco Art Institute]. I'm still trying to carry out some of the rhythmic principles taught there. Mr. Schaeffer's description of Beauty, as "The Balance of Unity & Variety" is still infinite enough for me. So far I haven't cared much about exhibiting, but a few things have gradually piled up. Do you show drawings where you show films? I could muster up a couple of dozen 18 x 24 matted. When you visit L.A. I'll show them to you, & you can let me know what you think of the idea. Some show the influence of cinematography. My phone number is Gladstone 7816. Please give me a ring so I shall be in when you call.

Cordially,

Elwood Decker

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

The era of purely ocular spectacles is at hand!
Theophile Gautier

THE ART IN CINEMA SOCIETY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS

art in cinema

series four

With this Art in Cinema series we are pleased to announce the installation of professional projection equipment and large screen in the new central rotunda auditorium.
The films themselves and the selecting of them should be mentioned here. Our previous activities were concerned with a comprehensive survey, covering both the past and present, of the film as a form of modern art. It is due to the enthusiastic public support of this work that Art in Cinema has become the first major non-commercial outlet for the examination of the contemporary experimental film. As a development, we now wish to exercise even more selectivity, and to place greater concentration on an exploration into the potentialities of the medium. We hope that this will become apparent in the present series and that it meets with your approval.

August 27th

MOTHER'S DAY
A nostalgic charade by JAMES BROUGHTON, featuring Marion Cunningham; filmed in San Francisco, 1948.

ZIGZAG
by FRANK STAUFFACHER (San Francisco, 1948)

MYSTERES DU CHATEAU DU DE
MAN RAY'S Dadaist voyage through a fabulous chateau, and a repeat showing of his delightful interpretation of a love poem, **L'ETOILE DE MER.**

THIS DAY
by LEONARD STARK. A personal reaction against war, as a film experiment by one of Robert J. Flaherty's cameramen.

FILM 1941
by FRANCIS LEE. Mr. Lee has recently been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship to continue his film experiments. In this film he reacts to the same emotional experience as Mr. Stark, but with a totally different approach to filmic expression.

IMPROVISATION NO. ONE
JORDAN BELSON'S second abstract study. (Berkeley, 1948)

LIFE AND DEATH OF A SPHERE
Black and white visual progression by DORSEY ALEXANDER. (Berkeley, 1948)

September 3rd

NOSFERATU
by F. W. MARNAU. The famous pirated German version of **DRACULA.**

THE WINDOW CLEANER
MARCH-BUCHET. New York as seen by the man who keeps its windows sparkling.

Films by Guggenheim fellow FRANCIS LEE:
LE BIJOU and IDYL

COLOUR BOX
by LEN LYE. A delightful hand-painted animation by Britain's master of this art.

EASTER ISLAND
Directed and photographed by JOHN FERNO. Impressionistic rendering of the relapse and decay of a culture.

September 10th

THE BLUE ANGEL
Directed in Germany by JOSEF VON STERNBERG; with MARLENE DIETRICH and EMIL JANNINGS. Rich chiaroscuro, sensual elegance and technical perfection.

DOING THE LAMBETH WALK
Another of LEN LYE's brilliant combinations of sight and sound.

September 17th

MOTION PAINTING NO. ONE
OSCAR FISCHINGER's latest film employing a completely new technique.

LAND WITHOUT BREAD
Produced and directed by LUIS BUNUEL. Immense feeling and realism by the director of the two surrealist climaxes **L'AGE D'OR** and **CHIEN ANDALOU.**

CADET-ROUSELLE
by NORMAN McLAREN. Hand-painted animation in the tradition of Len Lye.

MYSELF WHEN YOUNG
by ERNEST BEADLE. A collage of realistic objects and abstract patterns in a startling technique.

THE BARBER SHOP
An early comedy by the late W. C. FIELDS, directed by ARTHUR RIPLEY.

September 24th

A group of films by **HANS RICHTER:**

FILMSTUDIE
An evaluation of plastic forms of objects interrupted by dream-like motives and percussion shocks.

RENNSYMPHONIE A day at the races.

EVERYTHING TURNS, EVERYTHING REVOLVES!
The cry of the circus barker, the brashness and noise of a day at the circus employed in an early sound-on-film experiment.

VORMITTAGSPUK
A humorous grotesque in which everyday objects revolt against their pattern of use.

Two fragments of work in progress: **JOHN WHITNEY'S** form and synthetic sound; ALBERT KING'S production, with Frank Collins and Don Myers of **MOONLIGHT SONATA.**

LIGHT MODULATOR
by ELWOOD DEKKER. Space and light in movement.

GIOTTO DU AN AFFRESCO
The famous cinematic application to Giotto's frescos by the Italian avant-guard producers LUCIANO EMMER and ENRICO GRAS.

IN THE SEA
by ERNEST BEADLE. Color and movement alone, with form and texture removed.

THE BRAZEN HORSEMAN
A portion of Pushkin's poem rendered as a lesson in montage by VLADIMIR NILSEN.

A dance film by Sydney Peterson and Hy Hirsh of Marian van Tuyl's
CLINIC FOR THE STUDY OF STUMBLE.

(TEAR HERE)

ORDER BLANK

NOTE: The Films have been drawn from many widely separated sources; from The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, from various other distributors, and from the individual artists themselves. We ask your indulgence when programs must be changed due to circumstances beyond our control—shipping failures, poor quality of prints, etc.

To: Art In Cinema Society
San Francisco Museum of Art
Civic Center, San Francisco

Museum Member ☐
Public ☐
(Check One)

Please send me_____series tickets at $6.00 each (series) including tax ($4.80 for Museum Members) for the series of 5 nights of ART IN CINEMA film series, August 27 through September 24, 1948 at 8:00 P.M. Friday evenings.

Name:_____

Address:_____

Total Amount Enclosed_____

(Make check or money order payable to the San Francisco Museum of Art, and enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of tickets.)

The series is organized on a non-profit, non-commercial basis with admission by series subscription only. Series tickets are $6.00 for the public, and $4.80 for Museum Members. Seats will not be reserved and seating limited to 500 persons.

Illustration 16. Program announcement for the fourth series, fall 1948.

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Fourth Series, 8/48

The Art in Cinema Society of the San Francisco Museum of Art Presents

ART IN CINEMA series four

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by NORMAN McLAREN. Hand-painted animation in the tradition of Len Lye.
MYSELF WHEN YOUNG
by ERNEST BEADLE. A collage of realistic objects and abstract patterns in a startling technique.
THE BARBER SHOP
An early comedy by the late W. C. FIELDS, directed by ARTHUR RIPLEY.

September 24th
A group of films by **HANS RICHTER:**

FILM STUDIE
An evaluation of plastic forms of objects interrupted by dream-like motives and percussion shocks.
RENNSYMPHONIE A day at the races.
EVERYTHING TURNS, EVERYTHING REVOLVES!
The cry of the circus barker, the brashness and noise of a day at the circus employed in an early sound-on-film experiment.
VORMITTAGSPUK
A humorous grotesque in which everyday objects revolt against their pattern of use.
Two fragments of work in progress: JOHN WHITNEY'S form and synthetic sound; ALBERT KING'S production, with Frank Collins and Don Myers of MOONLIGHT SONATA.
LIGHT MODULATOR
by ELWOOD DEKKER. Space and light in movement.
GIOTTO DU AN AFFRESCO
The famous cinematic application to Giotto's frescos by the Italian avant-guard Producers LUCIANO EMMER and ENRICO GRAS.
IN THE SEA
by ERNEST BEADLE. Color and movement alone, with form and texture removed.
THE BRAZEN HORSEMAN
A portion of Pushkin's poem rendered as a lesson in montage by VLADIMIR NILSEN.
A dance film by Sydney Peterson and Hy Hirsh of Marian van Tuyl's CLINIC FOR THE STUDY OF STUMBLE.

[An order blank followed. I am not clear about the reasons for Stauffacher's putting some films in bold print and others not; in some instances it seems honorific, in others merely graphic.]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Sidney Peterson, 8/4/48

Aug 4, 1948

Dear Frank:

It looks like a good series, slightly inflated as, of course, everything is these days. The quotation from Gautier mystifies me slightly. Or is ocular intended to include auricular? Is the little man on the white horse F? I presume. Also I wish to make a nominal protest against the studied use of lowercase in connection with Marian's dance. After all … Incidentally my name is not spelled with a y and the correct title for the dance is STUDY FOR A CLINIC OF STUMBLE, not as the program has it. I look foreward to seeing Zigzag. Where is Harry Smith? I mean his film.

Sincerely,

SP *[hw]*
Sidney Peterson

Reprinted by permission of John Kasarda.

[Peterson is responding to the Series Four flyer.]

Illustration 17. Frank Stauffacher and James Broughton filming Broughton's *Mother's Day.* Stauffacher was Broughton's cinematographer for the film. Courtesy Joel Singer and Amos Vogel.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Maya Deren, 8/8/48

[. . .]

August 8, 1948

Dear Frank Stauffacher:

I guess you couldn't get around to that book-store party, and I'm sorry we didn't have a chance to meet again before you left. I don't want to bother you about it, but you did, at one point, say something about the possibility of my getting a little more help from the SF. Museum for my film-in-progress.

I do need it most desperately right now, and I'd be infinitely grateful if you would do what you can about it.

Thanks a lot, and I enjoyed our meeting so very much,

Sincerely,

Maya Deren *[hw]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

James Broughton, "Frank Stauffacher: The Making of *Mother's Day*," *SPIRAL*, No. 1 (1984)

Frank Stauffacher came into my life in the summer of 1946 at the time Sidney Peterson and I were playing with a 16mm camera borrowed from a psychiatrist. We had been amusing ourselves at odd hours exploring camera trickery and irrational images without anticipating any public view of the results. But Frank Stauffacher had heard of our doings (the art world of San Francisco being in those days a small circle) and he offered us a specific showdate in the coming autumn. This was the moment when we first took ourselves seriously as film artists.

Stauffacher was organizing that year a series of programs at the San Francisco Museum of Art to be called Art in Cinema. This was to be the first extensive examination of avant-garde cinema ever presented in the United States. Though he was earning his living as a commercial artist, Frank nourished a passionate desire to make personal films of his own. Art in Cinema was to be his way of educating himself in the history of film experiment while at the same time creating a congenial showcase and a knowledgeable audience for new work in the medium. Fortunate in obtaining the support of the Museum for the launching of his dream, he became, without intending it, the father of a burgeoning American art in the Bay Area.

He sought out artists who were working in isolation or neglect, such as Harry Smith, the Whitney Brothers, Gregory Markopoulos, Willard Maas, Douglas Crockwell, Sara Arledge, as well as exiles like Hans Richter, Moholy-Nagy, Oskar Fischinger, and Man Ray. He also hunted out unknowns like Peterson and myself, giving them encouragement and money. To us he proposed that we share the final program of the first series with Maya Deren's recently completed film, *Ritual in Transfigured Time*.

Frank's "discovery" of us was the spur that changed our lives. Peterson and I prepared for our premiere with fret and excitement. We shot additional material, edited frantically, concocted a title, tested musical accompaniments, and waited impatiently for the big night. It was not Frank Stauffacher's fault that the premiere showing of *The Potted Psalm* was a chilly disaster. The audience was simply not ready for it, and said so. I realized I wasn't ready for that audience either. Not until I could present a work of my very own.

Since *The Potted Psalm* had been almost entirely photographed and edited by Peterson, I now wanted to make a film entirely of my own vision and ordering. My waking hours seethed with imagined scenes and obsessive memories, just as my sleeping hours had been doing for a long time. The Art in Cinema programs had revealed to me not only the original discoveries of Lumiere and Melies, but also many imaginative inventions which followed the pioneers. I longed to use this language in my own peculiar way, but I had no means and no equipment. I took advantage of Stauffacher's friendliness and asked him for help.

I had liked Frank immensely at our first meeting. In fact we had both experienced immediate attraction to one another, although he was at the time more attracted to tall blondes. He and I were the same height, had similar social backgrounds, and a compatible sense of the absurd. He had olive skin, soft raven hair, a courtly and gentle manner, and a way of nodding smilingly as he listened to you. He nodded this way when I told him of my film hopes and asked to borrow his camera.

He owned a Bolex which had been with him during the War when he had been on active duty in the South Pacific with the Signal Corps. It was the only other camera I knew of, aside from the psychiatrist's Cine Special which Peterson had. But Frank declined to lend his camera to me. He wanted to keep it handy for his own experimenting. Besides he knew I had never touched a Bolex in my life. He did, however, offer to lend himself *with* his camera to the making of whatever I had in mind. This was a great gift, and I am still grateful for it. Without him *Mother's Day* might never have been made, nor made so well.

The Bolex had seen active duty on Guadalcanal and it wore its battle scars proudly. It had been dropped, bombarded, kicked, sat on, and left out in the rain. The exigencies of tropical warfare had worn off the indicators on the aperture and the focus ring, so that one had to use resourceful guesswork and creative intuition in every scene. Its pressure plate bumped the image, it made strange groans, the parallax was unreliable. The camera had to become part of your own body or it would not work. But when it did work, it made beautiful pictures.

I called it fondly The Battered Bolex. Because it had been through hell, it had a responsive soul, a wise and knowing eye, and an appetite for heavy duty. Eventually it became my own first movie camera. After *Mother's Day* was finished Frank acquired a new model and I bought The Battered Bolex from him for $75. With it I filmed *Loony Tom* and *Four in the Afternoon*. The Battered Bolex and Frank Stauffacher taught me how to be a cinematographer of sorts, taught me how to see what my own style was. I treasure the memory of that instrument. It should have been preserved as historical artifact. But I sold it for $50 in 1951 when I was raising money to get to England. Where do its remains lie now?

Mother's Day took most of a year to complete. It was shot off and on throughout the winter of 1947–48, mostly on Saturdays and Sundays when we were free of workday obligations. During that time Frank and I necessarily became close collaborators and dear friends. In the early stages we went to see Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* six times at the Clay Theater, where it had its first run release in the United States. We were both inspired by it, and I daresay its methods could have been a major influence. For me it set an unforgettable example: a poet making a poetic film! It was my turn to try.

I began the film with a scenario based on my recently produced theater work, *The Playground*, in which an A-Bomb threatened society was visualized as a children's playground occupied by fidgety adults. But once we began actual shooting, explosions from my unconscious populated the scene with more deeply personal connotations, and I found myself opening up all the wounded memories of my San Francisco childhood.

Each one of us has to come to terms with the models we were given by our families, with the toys that were forced on us and the forbidden toys we were tempted by. Each of us has to find a way to heal the agonies of trying to grow up as a unique being despite all parental attempts to prevent it. This was the challenge that overtook me once we had begun the film. Stauffacher understood intuitively what I then had to create: an animated family album of snapshots and portraits derived from all I remembered of my unreasonable mother and the world I invented behind her back. Despite his empathy for the theme he never spoke of his own mother. Of his family I knew only his younger brother, Jack, who portrays the stylized father figure in the film.

With The Battered Bolex Frank gave shape to the visions of my soul and put frames around them. He translated my seeing into his camera. Our rapport was so strong that he came to seeing outwardly what I was seeing inwardly. Brakhage commented on this many years later when in 1962 he filmed the wedding ceremony that eventually shaped into *Nuptiae.* He said that he tried not to do it in his own style but in Stauffacher's. What a valuable circle is the Brotherhood of Light, ever interacting with respectful comradeship!

In the opening of *Mother's Day* Stauffacher appears briefly, dressed as a cavalier holding a halberd. I put a cloak around him and gave him a plumed hat, posing him as an idealized suitor for the "lovely" mother-princess. He is juxtaposed in the scene with Kermit Sheets, who is dressed as a suitor in white tie and tails, carrying a large box of candy (which shrinks to a lollipop). Thus both Frank and Kermit are presented at the beginning of the work, stylized as devotees of the Mother in all that follows. And so they were, along with me. They were my two indispensable confreres on the project. With Kermit I worked out ahead of time the action, the casting, the continuity. Then on the set we relied upon Frank to turn our intentions into film magic. For the three of us there was always some unimaginably splendid goal to be jointly realized, even when we had no idea how it would all come together.

The film was completed in time for a cast preview on Mother's Day of 1948, and Frank scheduled its premiere on his Art in Cinema series the following autumn, when it was politely received. It has always met with more enthusiasm in Europe.

Art in Cinema was Frank's public monument, which fertilized a whole generation and brought filmmakers to San Francisco from all over the country. His own films were the distinctive souvenirs of his loving spirit. And they were very much his own vision.

During the many months of *Mother's Day* production Frank photographed at night examples of the then new art of neon signs. He created a dance of moving color forms in abstracted configurations, synchronized to Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto." This lively film was titled *Zigzag*. Then he fell in love with a petite blonde dancer and moved into an apartment in Sausalito that overlooked

San Francisco Bay. The romance, the waterside location, and the somnolent town itself prompted his most personal film, *Sausalito*, which expresses a rhythmic delight in the world and the joy of being alive to dance in it.

His last film was an ambitious documentary of the city he loved to photograph. *Notes on the Port of St. Francis* is an endearing glimpse of San Francisco in the early 50's, looking like a benign Mediterranean port with plenty of parking spaces, no high-rises, and casually goofy people. It was another of his valentines.

Then, only a few years later, Frank Stauffacher was dead. There is a mysterious and unsettling irony about his death. It so happened, amazingly enough, that both Frank and the beautiful woman who portrayed the mother in my film—a fine artist named Marion Cunningham—died soon after the work was finished, and from the same cause. The two most gentle and beautiful persons connected with the project, both in the prime of their lives, were destroyed by tumors of the brain. I still feel the sorrow of this tragedy. And wonder. Were they sacrificial victims? Was this some revenge of the Terrible Mother?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Elwood Decker, 10/3/48 *[hw]*

Oct 3rd

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

Weeks ago I sent you the film you asked for. No reply. A week ago you were planning to show it. You promised to return it promptly. No film. Whenever you wrote to me, you received an immediate answer. You got what you wanted, but you haven't given me the slightest acknowledgment. Nothing but complete indifference. Do you like to be treated that way?

Cordially,

Elwood Decker

1311 N. Laurel Ave.
Hollywood 46

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Hans Richter, 10/13/48

The College of the City of New York
THE CITY COLLEGE
CONVENT AVENUE AND 139TH STREET

Oct. 13, I948

[. . .]

Dear Frank,

Thank you for your letter and for your detailed information.

I'm not so enthusiastic about the whole thing as I thought I would be. The first place the idea to call my exhibition of paintings "Art and Cinema" seems to me rather inexact. As a matter of fact what I wanted to show with the exhibition is that Art and Cinema has grown out of the art problems of Modern Art. My scrolls are not to be considered preparations for films as little as my paintings. They are dealing with art problems especially Modern Art to which I have dedicated my whole intensity as a painter. The problem of these paintings and of this art is not made clearer by relating it to the movies as a kind of outgrowth of them but just the other way developed and developing in mod art. But there is no use talking about spilt milk but I thought I should tell you that it irritated me.

Film: I don't worry so much about the critics but I have gotten only Miss Hodel's nice interview. If you could get me the other criticisms I would be grateful.

As I can see from the account Miss Exelberth gave me over the phone, the film did not do well at all there, which is surprising because the membership of the museum alone should have made it financially a success. It shows now that it was a big mistake not to have dealt with you but with smooth business men. On account of this experience we have changed our policy here completely and shall deal in the future with organizations like yours first. Do you think there is still some chance of doing it?

The California School of Fine Arts might run film study and my recorded speech once, not more.

The film is running now in Boston and Washington and I got a beautiful little silver statuette (after Giovanni Bellini) as the Venice prize.

Don't believe, dear Frank, that my above mentioned criticism is personal. I know you did all you could, I hope the understanding next time will be better.

My best to your pretty love and your brother with beard and fiancee.

Adieux,

Hans *[hw]*

Hans

[hw] P.S. May I ask Dr. Freeman to keep my exhibitions for a little time longer in storage, as it is not decided yet where it would go first from there and if possible I would avoid double transport for security sake.

PS2 The Museum informed me that the damage to the big scroll was so light that it is not worth mentioning. Ok. Forget about it.

PS3 The films could be sent back to me.

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Maya Deren from Frank Stauffacher, 1/10/49

Jan 10, 1949

Dear Maya,

There is nothing much I can say as excuse for my not answering your letter of several months ago. I still must thank you for the invitation you extended to me for the book store party, and apologize for my not showing up. It was that asthma again, which unaccustomed N.Y. heat injected me with.

We spent all available funds on Series Four, which took place during latter August and September. It was quite a venture in an effort to continue drawing the immense crowds that had followed Art in Cinema, and which I felt were beginning to lag. We had to spike the program with Man Ray's presence, a talk by him, a show of Richter's paintings, reducing Richter's old German films to 16mm., etc. and this all drained the fund. It worked out very well, however; and the Art in Cinema organization is back on its feet. But you can see why it was almost impossible to extend the additional help to you in August, when you needed it.

Could we show your new film, MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE on either Feb.11, or Feb.18? As I say, we are in a position again to pay a substantial fee in addition to the rental cost; this was the original intent of the Art in Cinema showings, as you know. Although we couldn't help you in August, we can make up for it now.

These two dates will not constitute a series as has previously been the case. I'm not certain what else will be on them, although there is a list I have at hand. I'm most anxious to hear from you, and then I can proceed from there.

I did enjoy meeting you in N.Y. I had to leave the next week, and was sorry not to have contacted you before leaving.

Most sincerely yours,

[Frank Stauffacher]

P.S. How are your classes at Smith going? Would it be possible to exhibit the shooting script for this new film (or any of the others) in much the same manner as you showed me and explained to me—as you had done for A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY?

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Hans Richter from Frank Stauffacher, 1/49

Dear Hans,

Yes, our correspondence has become rather one-sided, and I am very embarrassed that I am to blame. It was one of those situations where, no longer devoting regular hours to art in cinema correspondence, I would put off writing letters until tomorrow. Since the end of the last series I've been devoting my full time to a lot of other activities, spurred on by the fact that I'm married now, since about the middle of Nov. The Bobbie, whom you ask about is my wife, the little girl you met here with me. On our honeymoon, we spent a number of days at Big Sur, and I can assure you that any misgivings about our (your and my) hasty, unannounced visit to Henry Miller, are quite groundless. He asked me more about you, and was sorry that we could not have stayed longer at that time. He also said that he had received a letter from France—I can't remember who from—asking whether or not it was true that he was making a film with Hans Richter! This twisted rumor no doubt has its origin in the fact that you and Henry merely have your names adjacent to one another in our Art in Cinema catalogue.

I have to go along way back to catch up on our correspondence. I remember you seemed a little piqued at the bulletin announcement about coupling your exhibit with the Art in Cinema title. That was done by Mr. Church long before the exhibit arrived here, and what he meant to say was that your exhibit of paintings was in conjunction with the Art in Cinema showings. However, that was made clear in the manner the exhibition was hung, and it all worked out quite well, with your recorded talk, and your films. (For which I am again sincerely grateful to you.) I don't know what to say about DREAMS running a shorter time than expected here, except that it was given a bad review, as I already wrote, by the Chronicle critic. I'm awfully sorry about this, but there was nothing to do about it. However, I think if it were to reopen here, it would receive a fairly good run. I say this because I'm surprised to come across people every now and then who did not see it, and regret not seeing it.

Your exhibition was sent to Chicago about two weeks before Xmas, so that was plenty of time, I think. By now, you will have received the films, which I had been holding here at the Museum all the while.

Also on our honeymoon, we had a pleasant afternoon and evening with Man Ray and Julie. The latter taught Bobbie how to roast a leg of lamb. Jay Leyda came over later, and we had a good evening. Man's show opened at the Copley galleries a week later, and I'm sorry that we could not remain to see it.

Now about the photographes: I will be very happy to collect something from all our local people. It will take a short while, as prints will have to [be] made for most of them. This will include a couple from myself, as I've been making some ardent, if spasmodic, struggles with the medium. There will also be: Sidney Peterson, Jordan Belson, James Broughton, Dorsey Alexander, Jim Davis, Martin Metal, Robert Howard, Leonard Tregillus, and Claire Falkenstein. The German book sounds like a wonderful idea. Perhaps it is somewhat like the one to be published in England, edited by Roger Manvell, of which the U.S. section will be written by Lewis Jacobs.

I'm planning to give two evenings of experimental films here, a kind of supplementary Art in Cinema program—not a subscription series—that will attempt to bring the showing of recent local work up to date. This will be Feb.11, and Feb.21. There is always a constant mumbling and rumbling hereabouts in connection with the experimental film; people are always "going" to make one, or "are in the process" of making one, and out of all this comes some rather interesting stuff now and then.

The most interesting thing about all this is that the noveau experimenter thinks he has done something avant-garde, when actually it has all been done—at least in most cases—by yourself twenty years ago, and done better. It seems terribly hard to go in a new direction in film expression. All the directions seem already traversed. But that is always the way it seems in anything,

I again want to thank you for the wonderful help you gave us on the last series. And anything that I can do to help you, I will be more than eager to do.

Best wishes,

Frank

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Hans Richter, 1/21/49

[. . .]

Jan. 21, 1949

Dear Frank:

My best congratulations to your marriage with this sweet girl Bobbie. I hope you will be happy with her and, what is not less important, make her happy.

Today only a short note in which I want to thank you for straightening out the thing with Henry Miller. Maybe the rumor of the collaboration between he and I came up because of an article Eng wrote in a Hollywood paper after I told him I would visit Miller on my way to San Francisco. Varese had suggested, as I told you once, that I should contact Miller to work with me on "Dreams" which I did. But as a matter of fact I would be very much interested even delighted if a collaboration between Miller and me would work out one day.

Here follows now a suggestion I have to make which you might think over. The "Cinema 16" follows your footsteps in "Art In Cinema." They are so successful here that they sell out every performance and certainly make money. Why couldn't you arrange with Mr. Vogel of "Cinema 16" that he sends you his programs which he chooses rather intelligently and successfully. I don't think he has to pay very much for them. Or, maybe you shall open a sub-section of "Cinema 16" in San Francisco. It's a full-time job but Vogel does very well with it. His address is: A. Vogel 59 Park Ave.

I just came back from Chicago where I showed the film at the university twice in a big auditorium. We made in two showings more than in the three weeks the film ran in San Francisco. That has convinced Mr. Shapiro finally. As a result, we have cancelled all theatre showings for the next two years and will exploit the film exclusively in museums or universities or on a fixed-rate basis or as I have done with the Renaissance Society in Chicago: fifty-fifty of the ticket sells at I.20 [$1.20] a ticket. If you or your friends are still interested in exploiting the film in this new framework, let me hear of it.

I would like to buy ten other copies of "Art in Cinema." Can you have them sent to me? I shall send you a check as soon as I know they are available. That's all for today. My exhibition in Chicago looks beautiful but my old scroll on paper is rather damaged and I feel sorry about it. Give my love to Bobbie, all my best,

Your old,

Hans *[hw]*

Hans

Reprinted by permission of Ursula Lawder.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Maya Deren, 2/8/49

[. . .]

Dear Frank:

This material is both late—later than you expected—and more elaborate that either you or I expected.

It is late both because of a period of illness which interrupted the work, and because it turned out to be more elaborate than I had planned. And it is more elaborate, not because of vanity, I can honestly say; but because, as it became apparent, no one had any idea of this labor: this—the actual, material, way I go about making the films; this—which is the evidence and the illustration of what I mean in speaking of the non-literary, visual way of conceiving of films and, above all, what I mean by the "form as a whole" and why I call myself a "classicist."

I have written and spoken about the idea of the "total form as a whole" until I was blue in the face. Yet, the tendency has been to regard all this talking and writing as some intellectualized excercize, an elaborate edifice which might be "fun" or "interesting," but, in the final analysis, something quite separated and apart from the films themselves; and one could take or leave one or the other. The tendency has been to regard as isolated—one from the other—the emotional effectiveness of the films on the one hand, and the intellectual labor involved in their conception. It is a reflection of the continual effort to make a schism between the heart and the mind.

It is true that an appreciation, in emotional terms, of my films can be enjoyed without an understanding of the history of their structure. This latter knowledge is, in fact, irrelevant to that appreciation. But to be able to enjoy the emergent product of a process without understanding the process does not mean that the process was either irrelevant or unnecessary for the achievement of the end result. One might very well drive a car without understanding a thing of its structure or manufacture. But there would be no car to drive without that, and certainly, for the maker of cars, it is the processes which are the core of the matter. I do not insist, that people concern themselves with the principles out of which I work; but I do insist that they grant the existence of those principles, and that they not loosely, and in negligent ignorance, imply such principles as sur-realism, sponteneity, etc. to my work. I am tired of people thinking that I sort of "Dream up" the films in a sort of romantic daze and that I go about taking an shot here and there as it happens, and put them together.

I am also somewhat adversely affected by the fact that the recent vogue for making 16mm "art" films (for which I am somewhat responsible by my insistence that any one can make a film—I meant it only in practical terms, but I did not mean, obviously, that any and everyone was creatively capable of making a good one) is based on a rather loose idea of dream feeling and without any really responsible regard either for the craft of film or for the problems of form which any serious artist must tackle.

It is all these feelings that conspired to force me to make as full a presentation as possible.

The scrolls are not the original ones I used for the simple reason that the originals would not be understandable to anyone except myself. Since they are notations for myself, they are enormously abbreviated. They are full of verbal abbreviations which are personal, of colored pencil codes (different colored check marks for "take," "retake," etc. Notes are scrawled on them, such as, "Don't forget to take the hat for this shot." They are battered by being hauled about on all the shooting sessions. Almost without exception they have cat foot-prints on them because I keep them out to think about them all the time; and they have coffee stains and eggs yolk on them for the same reason.

The exhibition of a scroll in such condition would only add to confusion. My purpose is, here, to illuminate and clarify and I am opposed to the snobbism which regards that coffee stains and scrawls give a thing that "intimate" feeling of understanding the artist.

The scrolls which I am enclosing are copies of the originals, except that the drawing is clearer, abbreviations are written out, and it is clarified.

The "Shape" of Meditation on Violence, was, in its original form, tacked on to a board, There was only the curve, at first, and over a period of several months I would tack on bits of paper here and there along the curve as the ideas developed in me. It was in this way, with bits of paper, that the whole elaboration of that form (I have neatly typed up that elaboration) took place. All the

differentiations between the treatment of the sections stemmed from always having the total form as a whole before me.

As for where the curve came from, I think it resulted both from my growing concern with the problem of a non-climatic [climactic] structure (which I want to achieve in my big film in progress), and from the nature of the material, and I think the material was attractive to me because of this growing preoccupation with continuous, on-going, infinite concepts rather than the finite, climatic [climactic] form which governs the previous films.

Some last remarks, in case someone asks you.

The actual movements of the boxing are so much more complicated than the movements of Choreography for Camera, that I could not draw them. However, I worked much more with the boxer, looking at the movement through the camera, and the visual image of the movements was carried in my head. Also in my own body, for before doing the film I learned, myself, the entire chain of Wu-Tang movements and still do them for exercize almost every morning.

This film, dealing with an interior statement, is a complete departure from my other films. Before, I was concerned with relationships—exteriors. Here I am concerned with the nature of the thing as such. I stay with one person all the time and he is not related to anything except the camera.

PLEASE RETURN ALL THIS MATERIAL CAREFULLY WRAPPED, AS I SHALL TRY TO HAVE SUCH EXHIBITS ELSEWHERE. YOU MAY LEAVE IT UP FOR A FEW DAYS BEYOND THE FILM SCREENING BUT RETURN IT TO ME BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH.

Let me know your reaction to this and that of other people.

You can quote any part of the letter that you find helpful.

Best wishes,

Maya *[hw]*

*[hw]*P.S. The stills can be connected to that part of the film to which they are related by red string or arrows.

MATERIAL TO SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM

RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME

1. 10 large stills, mounted. Numbered in order in back.
2. Article. (From Dance Magazine)
3. 2 Sections of original shooting script.

A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA

1. Scroll of film
2. Contact film strip of entire film, mounted vertically
3. Three large stills (leap) mounted in horizontal strip.
4. Original synopsis of film
5. Article on film, (from Dance Magazine)

MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE

1. Large "Shape" of film
2. Tri-color written elaboration of "Shape."
3. Scroll of first 7 shots of Wu-Tang
4. Film strips: individual; relating to first 8 shots and some miscellaneous movement sequences from Wu-Tang.
5. Large stills:
   2 from Wu-Tang blue asterick
   1 single, SHAO LIN blue and red asterick
   5 SHAOLIN, mounted in horizontal strip, bl & red Asterick
   2 singles , SWORD SHAO LIN, red ast.
   3 SWORD SHAO-LIN, mounted vertically strip
   3 SWORD CHAO-LIN, three identical stills, from climax freeze point, mounted vertically
6. Article from Dance Magazine

GENERAL

1. Two copies 'ANAGRAM OF IDEAS" with Index
2. Four articles, tear sheets: 1. "Magic is New"—from Mademoiselle
   2. "Efficient or Effective"—from Movie Makers
   3. "Creative Cutting"—from Movie Makers
   4. "Creating Movies with Time"—Popular Photography
3. Notice to Director of Screening with lectur [lecture] outline.
4. Bibliography
5. Program notes and circular.

A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA

SCROLL CODE:
In camera movements: Single red line indicates movement within the frame.
Double red line with arrows indications of movments of the camera frame.
In dancers movements: Single red line indication of general movement.

MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE.

WU-TANG section indicated by blue,
SHAO-LIN section indicated by blue and red, either combined (on astericks of pics.) or mixed—making purple, as in "shape" and "elaboration"
SWORD SHAO-LIN section—indicated by pure red.

IN SCROLL: Left column is shooting floor plan. Boxer's movements indicated in black; camera movements indicated in red.
Numbers refer to movement number
Right Column is framing plan column, indicating the framing of the opening, middle, and end of the shot. Arrows indicate general movement.

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Program Announcement for "Contemporary Experimental Films of Importance," 2/49

The San Francisco Museum of Art: Civic Center: San Francisco, California

ART IN CINEMA *two special programs*

CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS OF IMPORTANCE

> An art from which youth is barred from practicing freely is sentenced to death in advance. The moving picture camera should be like a fountain pen, which anyone may use to translate his soul onto paper. The 16mm. film presents the only solution, and in this I think America should take the initiative. … It offers an opportunity of trying for miracles.
>
> JEAN COCTEAU

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11th, 8 p.m.

MOTHER'S DAY—JAMES BROUGHTON'S nostalgic, witty mosaic of The Family's pictorial and emotional atmosphere, repeated on this program with the premiere presentation of the new sound track, an original score written for the film by HOWARD BRUBECK and performed by members of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer.

LIGHT RELECTIONS—by JAMES E. DAVIS, with original musical score by EDWARD MULLEN. The latest film by this famous painter and sculptor in transparent plastics.

AN IMPROVISATION—by DORSEY ALEXANDER. The development of an "automatic" unplanned abstraction on film.

THE PETRIFIED DOG—written, directed and photographed by SIDNEY PETERSON; produced by Workshop 20, The California School of Fine Arts. A film in which attention is focused on what has been called "the dream world as a place," with an unusual experimental sound track.

DIME STORE—by DORSEY ALEXANDER. A carefully composed sequential arrangement of familiar objects treated in a rhythmical or musical form of conception.

NUMBERS 1 and 4—by HARRY SMITH. Mr. Smith continues his experiments in the visual aspects of emotion sequences.

Sibyl Moholy-Nagy will give a short talk on the avant-garde film experiments of the late Lazlo Moholy-Nagy.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18th, 8 p.m.

MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE—MAYA DEREN'S latest work, a dance film with the Chinese dancer Chi'ao-Li Chi, based on movements from the Wu Tang and the Shao-lin schools of Chinese boxing, with a climactic sword episode. Miss Deren's first sound film.

RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME—MAYA DEREN'S famous film with the dancer Harriet Westbrook, will be repeated here in conjunction with her new film.

THE STONE CHILDREN—by KENT MUNSON and THEODORE HUFF. An ironic allegory and at the same time an experimental documentary.

FRAGMENT OF SEEKING—by CURTIS HARRINGTON. A singular and moving cinematic portrait, a fragment from the existence of an adolescent Narcissus.

INTROSPECTION—by SARA KATHRYN ARLEDGE. A repeat showing of this noteworthy and brilliant dance-on-film experiment.

These two programs do not constitute a series, and no series subscriptions will be sold. Admission: 90 cents each program for Museum non-members; 60 cents for Museum members. Admission may be purchased at the door, or in advance by mail. Please send stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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Letter to Hans Richter from Frank Stauffacher, 2/49

Dear Hans,

You have probably given me up, by now, as a correspondent. But your two unanswered letters have been gnawing at my conscience every day, believe me—I just finished with a special out-of-series presentation of Art in Cinema, two programs in which strictly individual experiments, without the benefit of older, classics, were programmed in an effort to see if they could stand on their own feet. The response was much larger than expected, which was gratifying. I am only rather sick at the calibre of the films, really. I can't understand why there is not more intense and gripping experimentation, what with all the activity in that direction. I am enclosing a copy of the announcement. It certainly drew immense crowds—in fact, the first night had a line clear out to the elevator. The interest does exist, but so many of the films repeat themselves, or fail to sustain the interest that is implied in anything experimental. I am very concerned about it.

I have had a great deal of correspondence with Mr. Vogel over a long period of time, and when I was in New York last July I saw him a number of times and he did give me leads to films that were subsequently presented on our series last Fall. When we first started Art in Cinema two years ago, he bombarded me with questions, and upon the answers he founded Cinema 16. He certainly must be commended for carrying through this project alone, without benefit of a Museum such as this organization has behind it. He is attempting to set up a distributing business with experimental films also, I understand. In regard to your suggestion of perhaps my starting a branch of Cinema 16 here—it would be a full time task—and much too risky here to rely on upon that basis. He can do it because New York can, or should be able to provide a more or less continuous audience—as proved by the long run of your DREAMS there. But here it is different, and although we do get overwhelmingly huge crowds who follow Art in Cinema whenever it is presented, I am sure that it is only because by now this function has come almost to be an important social event in one sense—much as I hate to admit it. It seems the thing to do. It seems that all one has to do is mention Art in Cin-

Illustration 18. Two stills from Sara Kathryn Arledge's *Introspection* (1946). Courtesy Terry Cannon.

ema at the Museum and the crowds will gather. A number of other similar film presentations have been attempted here—on a commercial basis, such as The Berkeley Film Society, and the San Francisco Film Society, but in every case they unfortunately suffered a humiliating end, even though they really tried to advertise their films the same way that we do.

For this reason we have continued to keep Art in Cinema strictly a non-profit organization under the sponsorship of the Museum. And I mean "non-profit." I have never made a cent profit out of the entire thing, myself—and not because it did not make money, but because all the money has gone out in extremely high rentals to the individual film makers who have no money. (This is one reason I am so disappointed in the latest results.) I am just afraid that Art in Cinema would not survive here—at this time anyway—on a commercial basis. I may be wrong.

As a matter of fact I do wish there was someone who would take over Art in Cinema here at the Museum. It is developing into a full time job as it is, and I want to get away from it so that I can make films myself—which was the reason I came into it at first. We wanted to establish an outlet for this type of film, and then make the films. But the job of presenting them has grown into a huge task. Anyhow, I am notoriously bad at conducting business deals, and I do not want to get further into it. I say all this by way of explaining why I don't care to get further involved in presenting films outside of trying to keep up a certain high standard at the showings here at the museum.

I must mention, Hans, that this letter is being written under the sign of a kind of restless annoyance with myself, what I want to do, what I am doing, what I am not doing. I have so many projects on the fire, etc.

Enough about that. In regard to your DREAMS being run here, I'm sure it would do well at the Museum, and would like to present it under the arrangements mentioned. Perhaps sometime in Spring. We could talk about this. I'm very glad to know that you did so well with it in Chicago, and that Mr. Shapiro is convinced that this is the most advantageous way to show it.

Now about Henry Miller. I don't think that he saw DREAMS because he remains pretty isolated down there at Big Sur, and I would be sure to know when he does come to S.F., or to L.A. He hasn't been out of Big Sur, to my knowledge, since at least the middle of last year, before DREAMS was here on the Coast. I think it would be wonderful to have him with you on the new film. I don't know how he would be disposed to it, but I'm sure you could write him. If I can do anything in this direction, please let me know. Don't feel that he bears any peculiar feeling about that visit of ours. As I told you, when I saw him in Nov., he inquired about you most continuously. The thing I could do is write to Bezalel Schatz, the artist, who lives close to him, who knows him very intimately, and who is a very good friend of mine. Schatz knows all about you, and would be the person to contact, unless you think it would be wiser to contact Miller directly. If you think it would be better for me to write Miller directly, I will do so.

Speaking of DREAMS reminds me that I am apparently in very badly with Mr. Pincus to an extent that I can't understand. The other night I was standing in line with my wife and friends waiting to get into the Larkin Theatre. He came out, passing close to me and I reached out and gave him a friendly hello. He gave me a nasty look and cut me forcibly. Not that it makes any difference to me. But it is a little puzzling, unless he associates me immediately with all that rigemarole about DREAMS, and my disinclination to want to sponsor their opening night at <u>their</u> theatre. It looks as if he will nurture a grudge, a real suspicion of "Art" films, and of attempts at collaboration with Museums, etc. After all, he wanted us to send out direct mail about the opening at the Clay Theatre. Naturally we couldn't do this.

To get back to more immediate subjects—you may already know that Cinema 16 is going to show that film of Broughton's, the one I photographed, on Wednesday, March 9, along with a talk by Parker Tyler on the experimental film. I do hope you can get to see it. Broughton is in N.Y. now, he's been there a few weeks, trying to find a distributing outlet for the film. I gave him your address and he may have visited you by this time. At any rate, I am very anxious to get your opinion of the film.

That's about all for now. I think all current subjects have been covered. Let me know if I can help in any way towards contacting Henry Miller in regard to his working with you on the new film.

Bobbie sends warm greetings. She is always moved to know that you remember her and always send your love when you write. Incidentally, did you ever get a print of that photograph taken of all of us that night at Fisherman's Wharf? If not, I have an extra I can send you.

With all my best wishes,

Frank

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Letter to Theodore Huff from Frank Stauffacher, 2/49

Dear Ted,

I've been away, left right after the 18th showing, but that is not the main reason for my not writing sooner; Mainly it was because I didn't know what to say in view of the fact we did not run STONE CHILDREN as scheduled. I was embarrassed after all the writing and rushing to get it here, and then not showing it.

If we are going to continue "Art in Cinema," we will have to get a non-involved group to act as a screening board; I don't want to take the rap anymore for editing the programs. I get it from all

sides, all the time. Certainly I have no ax to grind, and certainly Art in Cinema doesn't set itself up to act as a judge of experimental films as such. I have only tried to keep it on the general level that it originally started with, and the films that we try to show constitute a direction, a certain standard of attitude toward the film medium. A lot of the things I have shown have laid eggs, believe me. I get criticised severely for including them on Art in Cinema. I get criticised by the filmmakers themselves because their own work flopped on our screen. "… it wasn't presented properly," etc. A case in point is the PETREFIED DOG. It was not well liked. Peterson accused me of sabotage because the "sound wasn't loud enough." It flopped, and he resents me because I am available to resent. He forgets that he was in the projection booth himself, controlling the sound. MOTHER'S DAY was well liked here and at Mills College (I understand it was not well liked in N.Y.). The fact that it was a local product may have had something to do with it. Its humor, in contrast to the PETREFIED DOG's violently insulting constants may have something to do with it. Personally, M.D. is not my idea of a film, but it seemed to me to have several levels of content and meaning, and the story on the surface acted as a symbolic theme to what was really trying to be said. It was told pictorially, the burden of the communication was carried by the pictorial elements—symbols, if you wish—and not the acting. I am not defending M.D. because I was involved in photographing it. I am trying to point out why STONE CHILDREN was not shown, and why M.D. was—a thing that you probably and violently disagree with.

It seems to me that when a film depends upon the acting of an individual in it (or a group of individuals) rather than the camera, to convey the meaning, it is then an actor's film, not the camera's. It is a performance, and it must stand or fall on the performing—the acting. In this, the professionals can beat us every time. If we take a theme, or story, involving a protagonist who is followed through a series of events of a kind such as murder, chase, sex—all the factors present in a majority of regulation Hollywood films, and if the camera is acting as a spectator to these happenings—showing the protagonist and what takes place—then the hero of the piece has got to be damn convincing. No amount of cutting, montage, angles, etc. can help an unconvincing performance. The protagonist asks you to look at him, and follow him through his adventures. You can be very sure that the audience, then will want a convincing performance and will judge it according to the best standards of acting anywhere. But this is not the case in the kind of experimental films that Art in Cinema tries to stress. Even in such focus-on-one-person's face as Deren's films, the person is form moving; they are the camera's inventions and the camera's eloquence—or at least they try to be. You cannot say Deren tries to "act." I have yet to hear anyone discuss her acting. One doesn't look for acting here. It is not the important ingrediant.

I want to repeat—I certainly have no ax to grind, and most certainly have tried to remain non-partisan, non-ideological and impersonal in putting on A. in C. You will perhaps disagree with what I have to say. Please discuss it with me. I may be wrong. No one has any criticism of STONE CHILDREN's camerawork. The cutting is superb. The movement is wonderful, and the people who did see it liked all of these qualities. But I felt and they all felt that it was an actor's film, and the actor, quite unconvincing. In the absence of sound (or I should say speech) time and again the players unconsciously resort to cliches of movement that one has seen in the most ordinary old-time silent pictures. It struck me that your other picture THE UNCOMFORTABLE MAN had so much more dynamic, moving cinematic quality. It was much more mature. It gripped the audience and they followed it through with absorbtion to the very wild and quite wonderful end, with its documentary shots of New Year's Eve. The good qualities of the film were not the acting but everything else, which was powerful enough to make the picture, to my mind, a real experimental film. But to concentrate STONE CHILDREN on the protagonists face, which must carry the film, and the emotion expressed being a kind of mute, surly antagonism throughout is not experimenting with the film medium, to my mind—no matter what shots and what cutting is also present. I want you to discuss this with me. It is what I think, and what the few others who saw it more or less think. I kept the film awhile in order to look at it again with other people because I was upset about the whole thing and have wanted to do my level best to be fair.

Please do not feel resentful with me on this account, but write me whether or not you agree or feel my criticism valid. I've got no other interest except trying to see good experimental films put on the screen at the Museum, and I'm not going about this task with any sort of a chip on my shoulder. We'll pay you a rental. I feel terrible in view of all your rushing to get the print through, etc., and that is why it has taken me a delay to write you. Its a good film, but the acting was all too unconvincing.

No one for a moment could believe that these things were actually happening to the hero. And that is what the film asks you to believe.

If this diatribe of mine seems excessively unfair please let me know what you think.

[Frank Stauffacher]

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James Broughton, 3/49 *[hw]*

c/o Ian Hugo
215 W. 13 St.
New York

Dear Frank:

I was appalled, first of all, by finding that "Mother's Day" had been described in Cinema 16 announcements as a "sophisticated take-off on I Remember Mama" etc. The publicity, this week, prior to the showing, has been a little better. But I have still not seen Vogel. He has put me off for a whole week. (Why?) There are 2 documentaries on the program with Mother, & Parker Tyler. Everyone here is documentary crazy. Experimental films are treated as something special, only to be sneaked in, in small doses. Vogel has a huge audience, strongly left (Trotzkyite, I'm told); he has already talked 'ideological film' to me over the phone. He told me, too, there was no difference between a documentary & an experimental film, or shouldn't be. I exploded: is New York not interested in works of the imagination? Then when I talked to Parker Tyler, & asked him what he thought of Mother's Day, he replied by telling me what he thought an experimental film ought to be—at great theoretical length. So you can see that, despite my intention of being nice & polite, I have gotten off on the wrong foot with these people. But they make me mad, with their patronising manner.

I am the more vexed by all this because, thus far, I've not been able to find any other distribution sources; Vogel has the field. [Rosalind] Kossoff at A.F. is, alas, out of town till the 14th. Yesterday Arthur Knight told me she might be interested; but she's only just beginning to take on a few American films. I shall surely see her as soon as she returns.

Now, at MMA: they have the Emmer-Gras films, but they're heavily booked. Impossible for April or May. Maybe summer. Fall would be better, but Akermark said she'd have to know as soon as possible. There are a few other films they have: Mr. Trull Finds Out, Object Lesson, Singing Earth—dance, Night Mail, etc. Knight told me Bouchard has a film on Miro; also gave me Joseph Cornell's address: there might be some treats in his collection, & they can be rented.

Maybe you can plan a brilliant fall series. I'll find out more as time goes on. Thank God for Art in Cinema! I know how you felt when you were here: there is nothing aesthetically comparable in any way. I wish you could be here next Wed. I rather dread it at this point.

I saw "Day of Wrath" & "Eagle Has Two Heads." Both were wonderful! I'll write again soon.

Jimmy

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[The description Broughton is complaining about reads: "A sardonic and poetic comment on childhood told in psychological symbols and visual metaphors. A sophisticated 'take off' on the 'I remember Mama' type of family history." See the Cinema 16 program note for the film in Cinema 16: Documents toward a History of the Film Society, *p. 114. The March 9, 1949, program included* Human Growth, *a sex-education film for children, and Luis Buñuel's* Las Hurdes *(Land Without Bread, 1932), plus Parker Tyler's presentation "How to Look at an Experimental Film."]*

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James Broughton, 3/8/49 *[hw]*

March 8

Dear Frank:

I liked Vogel: gentle and earnest fellow, surely: but alarmingly naive about experimental films. No one could say that he doesn't mean well, but he certainly does not think in terms of the same kind of audience that we do.

I'm meeting Maya Deren this afternoon, & will talk distribution. I lunch with Parker Tyler tomorrow, & will (I guess) talk theory. I'll report on the premiere tomorrow night: Vogel is very pleased because the ticket demand is greater than for any showing he's had before! I can't even get one for Virgil Thomson.

Kermit [Broughton collaborator, Kermit Sheets] starts home the end of this week. I'll be following soon after. I want to be sure of seeing [Rosalind] Kossoff when she returns, next week; she sounds more promising.

Best regards

James

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James Broughton, 3/16/49 *[hw]*

[. . .]

N. Y., 16 March

Dear Frank:

Thank you for the check, it is very generous, & you must have a cut for your share.

I have much much to report to you. But for now this is just to say that I shall be back the first of next week, & I'll want to see you as soon as is convenient. You might call late on Monday, if I haven't reached you.

Now I go to see Rosalind Kossoff. My opinion of Cinema 16 has not altered.

Yours ever,

Jimmy

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Letter to Ralph K. Potter from Frank Stauffacher, 3/23/49

[. . .]

March 23, 1949

Ralph K. Potter
46 Green Village Road
Madison, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Potter,

Thank you for your order for a copy of "Art in Cinema" earlier this month, and for your interesting letter.

I did read your article on visual music some time ago in an issue of "Hollywood Quarterly" and, of course, found it extremely interesting. I will look forward to seeing your new article in the Society of Motion Picture Engineers' Journal. Since our own publication we have shown numerous other films, other than those mentioned in that booklet. The tendancy, as in the works of the Whitney Brothers, and contrary to Oskar Fischinger's films—is to break away from exact rhythmical coordination and synchronization of the image and the sound. I must say that this appears to me to be far more a creative welding of sound and image than exact synchronization which can only reenforce the audible medium, or emphasise it visibly; it seems to me that the highest development of combining sound and image would be in the case of a composition where neither the sound nor the image were accompaniment to one or the other, but were each of importance to the other, harmonizing, one might say, or developing counterpoint, one to the other. The pros and cons of this question always abound, but in general I have found most interest in a truly creative approach to both sound and image simultaneously, since the rhythms of sound do not require a visual carbon-copy to make them any more emphatic to the senses, and vice-versa. For example, Eggeling's DIAGONALE SYMPHONIE stands complete as it is without sound. To emphasize its exact structure with a sound composition would be to overdo the original. To compose a parallel counterpoint, however, would be to orchestrate the original with an added instrument.

At any rate, I am making these remarks from what I have observed in audience reactions to our showings; I think the matter is an extremely interesting one, and would like to hear further from you at your leisure.

Most Sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher *[hw]*
Frank Stauffacher

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[The Potter article is "Audiovisual Music," Hollywood Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Fall 1947), pp. 66–78.]

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Letter to Arthur Knight from Frank Stauffacher, 4/2/49

April 2, 1949

Arthur Knight
370 First Avenue, Apt. 3H
New York 10, N.Y.

Dear Arthur,

It was a pleasure to hear from you again after all this time, and doubly so apropos the subject of your letter, as many of us here are beginning to take cognizance of television, which is just now starting to function in this area.

To jump right in: Your proposal, which Broughton had already mentioned, seems to me a really good one. I can speak for most of us around here who make experimental films by saying that we will cooperate with you as fully as possible. It would be an excellent outlet, as you mentioned. However, there are a couple of rather difficult problems. The main one, as I see it, is that with the exception of Broughton's films, and a short one that I made called ZIGZAG, none of the local experimental films have sound tracks; indeed, my little film could not really be shown commercially in any way since I re-recorded on the track some commercial recordings. This problem of sound, which actually amounts to far more expense than the rest of the cost of making a film, is a hard nut to crack. Up to this time it did not exist because the films could always be cued with recorded music when they were presented here. But now that certain little possibilities for their further distribution arise, the sound problem becomes a major issue. It is my personal opinion that this matter of the sound should be considered at the outset of making an experimental film because the track is an integral part of the medium. But in most cases the cost is prohibitive, naturally. Now, as to television, what could be done?

The second problem in connection with showing these films on television is that the majority of them were originally designed with the factor of color in view. It would be a gamble whether or not translation to black and white for a lot of them—particularly the abstractions—would work. What we could do is have black and white prints made for you. It would be much less expensive, and would reveal immediately their possibilities for television. I'm thinking that this problem of color is fairly great because just about three-quarters of local production is abstract, and thus color becomes an important part of their visual character.

With the exception of these two points, I'm sure we could all meet on a satisfactory agreement with you. Of course, the problem of sound is going to be a big one—television or not. It is impossible to send a lot of recordings along with a film when it goes out for distribution (although we have done it). And if there is any possibility of a commercial outlet, well then, recordings are flatly out.

At any rate, I'll sound out others here on the general idea, and perhaps some solutions will appear. I'll write you further quite soon—as soon as there is something concrete to give you.

We are now seriously thinking of trying to distribute our work from the Museum under the Art in Cinema banner. It has been going on in a small way for some time—nothing organized, rather haphazardly. But it seems something more definite will have to be done. The big hitch is funds; that is, we'll need clerical help, etc. I carry Art in Cinema entirely myself now, and although series of programs occur only a few times a year, I never seem to be able to keep ahead of all the correspondence and inquiries that come in. I do this all in my spare time, and take no salary for it. Distributing would have to be done on a more organized basis, and that is what we shall have to work out. This will be done when Dr. Morley returns from Europe in a few months. In the meantime we will continue on, perhaps even issue a kind of catalogue of films available.

I have lately been making some prospective one and two minute shorts for television—advertising shorts. Television is just beginning in this region, as I said, and there are very few local producers of this sort of thing. The possibilities here are quite good in this field, although they are no doubt terribly over crowded in N.Y.

In regard to your proposed television programs a couple of questions come up in my mind: Would these hour programs be good for only one showing? How does the "life" of a television film compare with that of theatrical films as far as their possibilities for continued showing is concerned? If a sponsor bought such a program, would that restrict the films contained in so far as other outlets such as our own distribution to film societies, etc.? I am hopelessly ignorant of the television dealings.

Meanwhile, I'll see what I can do about having prints made for you. It may be better to have them made in N.Y. at Guffanti since the prices here are higher. All of these films are so short, however, that a black and white print would cost each individual artist very little. It remains to be seen whether or not the color films would retain their meaning in B.&W. Also, let me know about the sound track problem.

It was a great surprise to learn of your leaving the Museum and going over to RKO.

You'll hear from me about the experimental films in a week or so.

Most sincerely yours,

[Frank Stauffacher]

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Arthur Knight, 4/16/49

[. . .]

April 16, 1949.

[. . .]

Dear Frank:

A brief and hasty acknowledgement of your long, generous letter of April 2. I can scarcely thank you enough for your expression of confidence in me. I only hope I can justify it. At this point, I have made an appointment for Wednesday with a Mr. Freeman of the American Broadcasting Company for an exploratory talk. I shall take up with him at that time the problems that you raise in your letter, although I think I know the answers fairly well already. Music, which is indeed a snaggy point today in television, would not seem to be too serious a question here: For films with original scores (yours and Broughton's), the question is simply do you have the music rights. If not—as you say you don't—why then just a listing of the commercial recordings that you used would do. We would have to check with the stations to see if those particular recordings have been cleared (the television studios do use quite a lot of recorded music to accompany their plays, I know). If not, I shall have to build a score as closely paralleling yours as possible from the music that has been cleared. And I think that is the answer right down the line: Send along the list of suggested musical accompaniments—not the records themselves—and we will try to match it.

Color is more important. One of the things I want to do with Mr. Freeman is to try to preview some of the color experimentals on a scanner. It is really unnecessary to have special black and white prints made up for this purpose: If the thing will go in television, a color print will do as well as a black and white (after all, you get precisely the same effect by making a black and white print from your Kodachrome master as you do by putting a color print through the scanner). I don't want any of you to go to the extra expense of making up special prints for this thing. Certainly not at this point, anyway. When we find which films can be used, then we might think of making up special black and white prints for television, to reduce print costs.

What I wish you would do is to start sending on to me copies of the films you think suitable so that I can start setting up sample programs. Send them marked to my attention, care of A.-F. Films, 1600 Broadway, New York 19. Incidentally, since Miss Kossoff is now becoming interested in the distribution of experimental films, this might be a way of killing two birds with one stone—or one shipment. I could show her the films for any of your people who are seeking a distributor for their pictures. I should explain that, although I am working on this out of the A.-F. office, this is an independent venture.

Finally, the "life" of a television film is not too bad. There are about fifty TV stations in operation now, each one a potential user—or let's say, one station in each key city, cutting the number about in half, for the present. That isn't too bad, and of course it isn't exclusive. What I dream of is having the whole experimental field stimulated by the fact [that] the people see these pictures on television and want to see more or want to see them again. My sincerest thanks for your good letter, and I hope to hear from you soon again.

As ever,

Arthur *[hw]*

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Arthur Knight, 5/30/49

[. . .]

May 30, 1949

[. . .]

Dear Frank:

Forgive me for this delay in acknowledging receipt of the films you so kindly forwarded. As I indicated, this whole project has to be carried on as an after-hours affair, and I have been hurrying through an article for THEATRE ARTS for a June 1 deadline. I have looked at the films now though (with Francis Lee and Lewis Jacobs, both of whom are very enthusiastic about the idea), and following the music recommendations you made. Actually, I looked at them twice, once without the music and once with. The difference is significant, and especially in DIME STORE, which I liked very much. PROEM, of course, is the prize, and Rosalind Kossoff has asked me to find out if Tregillus and Luce are interested in distribution. She would very much like to handle it if they are … Martin Metal's COLOR I liked considerably less—it seemed to rely completely on adventitious effects which only occasionally came off … The same is somewhat true of your own ZIGZAG, but there I felt you had greater control of the effects and the thing was brought off a lot better. It is also held together very nicely by the score. For the Metal film, incidentally, I used the second movement of Alban Berg's Lyric Suite which matches the feeling of the film but doesn't help it any.

But the real test comes this week. I have arranged a "scanning" date with a man from WJZ-TV to see which of them can actually be used on television. As soon as I have ascertained that, I shall send the rejects on back immediately so as not to deprive their owners of their use. I might add that this station is very interested in the project and—while it is by no means settled—indicated that if I could get together 13 half-hour "packages" they would create a half-hour evening spot for them. It would really make a wonderful send-off for the series.

As to progress, I have contacted Curtis Harrington for the Creative Film Associates series (no answer yet), Francis Lee will let me use his pictures, and I am trying to work out something with Amos Vogel that will make it possible for me to have access to the pictures that he has acquired rights to. If all goes well, I expect we can have the series all ready for Fall.

And now to your questions: MR. TRULL FINDS OUT was made by Joseph Krumgold and Henwar Rodakiewicz as a sort of sales promotion film for their Film Associates back around 1940. It is a fantasy about a man who thinks he is dead and so begins enjoying life. Incompletely conceived, it is difficult to follow points of view, difficult to discern what is fact and what is fantasy. But it does have the advantage of professional 35mm production and an entrancing Gian-Carlo Menotti score … EARTH never got to the Film Library. Miss Barry saw the dupe job in France last year and decided the quality was too poor … For films, have you thought of using one of those "Early Films of Record" reels? After all, at that time <u>all</u> pictures were experimental. I recommend either FIRST PROGRAMS or EARLY EDISON SHORTS. Also March of Time's excellent 16mm survey of MUSIC IN AMERICA (far better than their theatrical version). And did you use L'AMITIE NOIRE and GITANS D'ESPAGNE? Both are awfully good. I don't know of anything else new that the Museum has put out on 16. I did see this past week Philip Stapp's new PICTURE IN YOUR MIND, the successor to BOUNDARY LINES. I don't think it is at all as successful as the earlier film—too tight, too preachy—but still it is a worthy addition to what might be called the applied experimental arts … And I understand that MICHAEL ANGELO is being prepared for 16mm distribution. You might want to contact Bob Snyder of Film Program Services for more information on that.

Enough for now. I thank you again for the films you sent. I hope you will continue to send more, and I repeat I shall return those that I can't use at the earliest possible moment. Advise me if you will on what follow-through would be best on PROEM and Miss Kossoff—and again, my warmest regards to you.

Sincerely,

Arthur *[hw]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Amos Vogel, 6/7/49

[. . .]

June 7, 1949

Dear Frank,

Arthur Knight has asked me to collaborate with him on a project for television presentations of experimental films, and quite apart from our own projects for video that we are working on, I thought it would be fine indeed to "pool our resources."

In the course of working with him on this project, he showed me the films you had sent him, including Alexander's films, McCormick's, Belson's, Metal's, Tregillus' and your own. I had been unaware that these films were in New York.

The work being done by the circle of independent experimenters in the West is really quite impressive and very heartening. There is no doubt that your showings have helped to create a continuity of creative effort that can only redound to the benefit of the entire experimental film production field. Similar beginnings are noticeable in the East and we are approaching the day when there should exist closer national coordination in our exhibition, distribution and information-exchange activities.

Of course, we should like to present most of the films you sent to Arthur, probably in the Fall of this year (we have no showings during the summer). In this respect you could assist me by 1) sending me Hal McCormick's address so I can write him directly concerning SUITE no.2; 2) urging Martin Metal to answer my letters which have remained unanswered so far (is this his correct address: Art Department, City College of San Francisco, Ocean and Phelan Avenues?; 3) sending me rental rates, descriptive material for program notes and press releases on your ZIG ZAG which I found to be an often amusing and always interesting striking out in new directions (I enjoyed the "abstract" quality of the film).

Our experimental film catalog is now at the printers and what with printing delays, etc, should be available within the next few weeks. Of course, I'll send it immediately. We have quite an impressive selection of contemporary experimental films, as you'll be able to see. Incidentally, I am already beginning work on a supplement, as many additional films have been acquired. What is the status of your ZIG ZAG? In view of its quality, I should be very pleased to distribute it for you. Let me know if you are interested and I can send you further details as to procedure.

Among others, we acquired POEM 8 by Etting, which is by far his best film (Between you and me, I cannot blame your audience for laughing about ORAMUNDE). I dont know if you have seen POEM 8—if not, you should; it's one of the earliest uses of the "subjective camera" and although it was done around 1930, it has retained a certain poetic vitality and verve which make it quite an unusual film. It even has a certain amount of "story," a rarity in these days of the "enlightened" experimental film …

I should also mention Willard Maas' GEOGRAPHY OF THE BODY, which we now have. This is quite famous and you may know it; George Barker wrote an interesting poetic commentary. It's an "analogical pilgrimage, discovering the splendor and horror (?) of the human body … in spite of some limitations, I consider it one of the significant American experimental films.

In addition, we have some other new films, such as Hugo Lateltin's COLOR DESIGNS NO.1, a film very similar in conception and execution to Jim Davis' Light Reflections, although done entirely independently and by different techniques.

Our second full season is now over, but the amount of work does not subside. Nevertheless, one should not complain, given the amazing growth and progress that the project has made during the

last year. We more than doubled our membership and have become a real factor in the cultural life of the city.

It was unfortunate that of all the successful shows we had here, with all their attendant enthusiasm, that Broughton had to attend the one show at which we had some difficulties. Parker Tyler, usually an excellent speaker, 1) was terribly hampered by the fact that the microphones didn't work properly forcing him to speak very closely to them, and practically "paralyzing" him 2) presented a paper (in his customary prose style-sic) instead of a speech—I'm sure you know what I mean 3) believe it or not there was some "political" opposition to him in the audience—people who prefer DW to PR. Broughton witnessed the rudeness of some, but could not see the great number of letters that began descending on us after the show, all by members who profusely apologized to Tyler for their fellow-members.

Interestingly enough, in a questionnaire which we handed to members at our last performance, results indicate a great interest in experimental films and an insistent demand that we show even more of them in the future than in the past. This does not seem to bear out James' impressions.

Enough for today—I'll be looking forward to your answer to some of the questions raised here. Also, would you let me know if you have come across any new films that might be of interest to us, including addresses. (The films I mentioned above can be obtained through C16).

Let us try to maintain as much contact as is possible under the circumstances, so that we consult each other and collaborate more fully in bringing these films to more people. I'll try to do my share.

Sincerely,

Amos *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Amos Vogel.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Theodore Huff, 6/20/49

Hotel Van Rensselaer
A Knott Hotel
Eleventh Street near Fifth Avenue
New York 3, N.Y.

June 20, 1949

Dear Stauffacher:

On February 15, I sent you a film (The Stone Children). This is over four months ago and there has been no sign of its return! The railway strike was over months ago. Your conduct in this matter I find not only inexcusable, but incredible! Especially with a film you did not consider worth showing.

It is within your rights not to show a film if it is not up to your "standard." I'm sorry we lacked the cinematic variety of "Meditation on Violence," the professional finish of "Fragment of Seeking," and the slick photography and nasty little decadent "touches" of "The Potted Psalm," "The Cage," etc.

You don't have to bother about the rental money although a print was made for the "showing" and it cost $6 to send it. All I want is the film returned—and quickly, by air!

Theodore Huff *[hw]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Theodore Huff, 7/16/49

[. . .]

July 16, 1949

Dear Frank Stauffacher:

O.K., I am willing to bury the hatchet, but it was a long time.

Now that we are letting our hair down about our respective films, I will admit that I was very disappointed at the way the film went together. I thought we got some good stuff photographically (tho I notice the dupe is very far from the original), but it didn't seem to jell. However, I thought audiences used to experimental films might find something in it.

At present I am re-editing it to try to give it a "line," and am cutting out the acting. Then I am going to stick to straight films—on my own!

Sincerely yours,

Ted Huff *[hw]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Arthur Knight, 7/17/49

[. . .]

July 17, 1949.

Dear Frank:

Under separate cover I am returning LIFE AND DEATH OF A SPHERE and Hal McCormick's SUITE #1, also your own ZIGZAG. Things are going too slowly on this, and I feel guilty tying up your prints. Apparently Jordon Belson wants Amos Vogel to have his IMPROVISATION (at least, the can is marked IMPROVISATION: the film inside is called simply "1948"), and I shall turn that over to him when he gets back to the city. The only real nibble so far is on PROEM—which might have been anticipated, but which is not precisely what I had in mind. What I mean is that of all the films, PROEM is undoubtedly the most finished, hence the least "experimental" of the lot. But WABC, key station of the American Broadcasting Company's TV chain, does want to use it; and I know that Rosalind Kossoff wants to acquire it for A.-F. distribution. If Tregillus and Luce agree to let her have it, I think I shall let Rosalind complete the deal with ABC, since she has already had a lot of experience in dealing with the TV stations, and I should be loath to come in for a single shot on PROEM. Anyway, it would get their distribution through A.-F. off to a flying start. Incidentally, would you ask them what music was used? I know at least most of it was Dohnanyi's VARIATIONS ON A NURSERY TUNE, but it might be necessary to know which recording and if there was anything else. Music has to be cleared all the way with TV, you know.

I don't mean that I'm abandoning the idea entirely. I still think it is both good and necessary. But I haven't been able to get a reply out of Curtis Harrington lo, these many months, and I don't relish having to depend on Amos Vogel to any great extent. There are others who are ready and anxious to come in on this still, though, and I hope you will continue to send material to me to keep notes on. I feel I need varied material to make up at least half a dozen half hour reels before I can begin.

Looking at the pictures over "system"—the TV scanner—was quite an interesting experience. Even the black and whites turn out differently from what you might expect. White on a black background, it turns out, gets gobbled up in ghost, and the background itself becomes an untidy grey. Black on white, on the other hand, is very good—unless the lines are too fine or the movement too rapid. The stop motion of PROEM had a strange tendency to flicker, but the straight photography of your ZIGZAG came across well—and absence of color here strengthened the quality of your composition: ZIGZAG comes over very well on TV. So of the things you sent me, I could use PROEM, and parts of ZIGZAG, LIFE AND DEATH OF A SPHERE and IMPROVISATION. Martin Metal's film and DIME STORE depended too much on color. McCormick's SUITE was white on black.

I still think—in fact, urge—that you should set up your own distribution center out there. In point of fact, there is no reason why you should not take this television idea for your own out there. Perhaps you might even be able to bring in Harrington's group, or work with it, or through it or something. I just don't like to see something that is as unified in spirit as the experimental movement in this country become lost through excessive decentralization of distribution channels … And I repeat that if you can do your own for your group, it will prove more profitable in the long run.

Philip Stapp will be looking in on you one of these days soon. Take him up tenderly … He is a fine chap … Don't forget to ask Tregillus and Luce about their music. Perhaps they would write me directly (and, incidentally, if they prefer I will handle the ABC thing myself and just turn the check over to them). And again my thanks to you for all your patience.

Arthur *[hw]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Fifth Series, Fall 1949

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS
the one and only
foremost collection of American and European experimental films

ART IN CINEMA *Series Five*

September 23rd

SONG OF CEYLON
By BASIL WRIGHT
Britain's most famous and lyrical use of factual material.

IL PARADISO TERRESTE
RACCONTO DA UN AFFRESCO
IL CANTO DELLA CREATORE
GUERRERI
By LUCIANO EMMER and ENRICO GRAS
Four contemporary experimental films from Italy.

BERLIN STILL LIFE
SPREE
GYPSIES
MARSEILLES, VIEUX PORT
By L. MOHOLY-NAGY
Presented and discussed by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy.

COLOR DESIGNS NO. 1
By HUGO LATELTINE

PROEM
By LEONARD TREGILLUS and RALPH LUCE
Journey into the imaginary world of a chess board.

September 30th

A NOUS LA LIBERTE
By RENE CLAIR
The epitome of cinematic wit.

LA ROSE ET LE RESEDA
A recent experimental film from France. From a poem by LOUIS ARAGON;
recited by JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT, with score by JACQUES IBERT.

Illustration 19. Program announcement for the fifth series, fall 1949.

1848
By LE COOPERATIVE DU CINEMA FRANCAIS
A revolutionary use of graphic art with film.

MR. TRULL FINDS OUT
By HENWAR RODAKIEWICZ and JOSEPH KRUMGOLD
with score by GIAN-CARLO MENOTTI.

SAUSALITO
By FRANK STAUFFACHER
Unfamiliar visual and aural sensations of a familiar locale.

GIVE US THIS DAY
By LEROY ROBBINS and ROGER BARLOW
An experimental documentary.

October 7th

THE LAST LAUGH
By F.W. MURNAU
EMIL JANNINGS in the great German film that liberated
the moving-picture camera as a fluid medium.

OBJECT LESSON
By CHRISTOHER YOUNG
A famous American-made experiment of the thirties.

MR. FRENHOFER AND THE MINOTAUR
By SIDNEY PETERSON
Produced by Workshop 20, California School of Fine Arts. Based upon a story by Balzac.

ODD FELLOWS HALL
A satire by Leonard Tregillus and Denver Sutton.

LA POULETTE GRIS
DOTS
LOOPS
By NORMAN McLAREN

AQUA PURA BALLET
By Jack CANNON and RALPH ELLIOT

October 14th

DUCK SOUP
THE FOUR MARX BROTHERS
Directed by LEO McCAREY (1933)

PICNIC
By CURTIS HARRINGTON, with score by ERNEST GOL
Subtle depiction of a subjective adventure within the framework of middle-class life.

THE LEAD SHOES
By SIDNEY PETERSON
Produced by Workshop 20, California School of Fine Arts. Satire in the form of a ballad.

ARTICULATION
By CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN

FORM EVOLUTION
By MARTIN METAL
Growth, evolution and final dissolution of plastic form.

EVEN AS YOU AND I
By LEROY ROBBINS and ROBER BARLOW
A new angle on surrealism.

GOETHE IN SAN FRANCISCO
By FRANK STAUFFACHER

Illustration 20. Woman and dead diver, from Sidney Peterson's *The Lead Shoes* (1949). Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

The selection of films on Series Five has been motivated, as in all previous Series of Art in Cinema, by an effort to survey the film as a true form of modern art, still undeveloped, unrealized in its potentialities. While the films presented are a digression from the hackneyed and regular movie fare, sensational and bizarre material is not presented for its own sake. Art in Cinema presents sincere attempts to experiment with and enlarge the expressive scope of the films, whether they be large studio-financed works, or productions of individual artists, both past and present.

[An order blank followed.]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Hans Richter from Frank Stauffacher, 10/28/49

Oct. 28, 1949

Dear Hans,

Your good little note on the eve of your going to Canada reminded me how far behind I am again in answering you. My excuse this time is that we have just finished another Art in Cinema Series, the Fifth Series, and it was—much to my surprise—even bigger and better attended that ever before; which goes to prove that the American renaissance in experimental film is actually gaining momentum and, although completely unrecognized by the big producers in Hollywood, is building up a specialized audience of its own that now no longer can be accused of just consisting of strange intellectual types.

My own film production is going along "apace." As is the case with all of us, finances are the great aggravation. SAUSALITO, which had its premiere during the series, was very well received, but I still

Illustration 21. Still from Frank Stauffacher's *Sausalito* (1948). Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

want to smooth it out more. I am not yet satisfied with it completely. I wish the critical facilities, such as you yourself, and the other factors in New York, existed here. We get a huge audience response, but very little critical response from seasoned veterans in this field because there are none here. Its a pity, because individual experimental film production here is very active.

I am slowly breaking off from my old work as an advertising artist and getting more and more involved in film matters, much to the detriment of my pocket book, but it is becoming my real interest.

Bobbie is fine, is very happy, and has stopped dancing for awhile to go to the University of Cal., to which she commutes every day from Sausalito, where we live.

In our place at Sausalito, on the wall, which are old redwood board walls about sixty years old (Jack London once lived in the house we are in) on this wall, is a photo taken last year that we always enjoy looking at, and which always never fails to interest everyone who comes into the house. It is that picture we had taken of all of us eating dinner at Fisherman's Wharf when you were here. It has a wonderful quality, and reminds us of a very happy period.

Bobbie sends her love,

Best wishes and best of luck on the new film,

[Frank Stauffacher]

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Curtis Harrington, 12/1/49

[. . .]

December 1, 1949

Dear Frank:

Since I haven't heard from you for quite some time I thought I'd write and see if there are any new developments of note in experimental film in San Francisco. Kenneth and I would very much like to get our Program Two organized as soon as possible. Have you completed work on SAUSALITO by now? And has the score to FORM EVOLUTION been put on film yet? Creative Film Associates is going along splendidly, and if we can just get more film makers to cooperate with us (it is really entirely to their advantage) we can go ahead by leaps and bounds. The more I hear about Cinema 16, at least as distribution headquarters for experimental films, the more unsatisfactory it seems. They ran my FRAGMENT OF SEEKING on a program of "Cinema 16 favorites" the 25th; included were PSYCHE and THE CAGE. They used your program note for THE CAGE (which, from what I've heard, was not received very warmly).

Your last letter, dated October 25th, indicated that I might at least expect an extra $5.00 for the S.F. showing of PICNIC, since the bookkeeper made an error. And of course you thought there might even be more depending upon how it all tallied up at the end. I only mention this because I am still pushing myself through the bills that accumulated suddenly toward the end when I had to have the dupe negative and final print made.

Kenneth's FIREWORKS has created a veritable sensation in Paris. One film journalist has been writing articles everywhere about it. You may have noticed the mention of it in the latest issue of Sequence. Cocteau seems especially enthusiastic. I showed PICNIC to a Monsieur Jean R. Debrix who was here representing the French film (he lectured, brought cuts from various new French films, including Cocteau's Parents Terribles) and he expressed interest in having it in France next year, and will take care of custom details, etc.

Have you done anything about getting the older avant-garde films in Simon Gould's collection in N. Y.? Do send me an announcement of your next series when it is available.

Sincerely,

Curtis *[hw]*

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Jim Davis, 2/25/50 *[hw]*

Mayan Hotel
3049 W. 8th St.
Los Angeles, 5, Calif.

Sat. Feb. 25, 50

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:—

Rosalind Kossoff of A.F. Films told me she was writing to you that I was coming to San Francisco this month. So I am writing to you also to say that I hope to be there within the next two or three weeks and am looking forward to seeing you.

I am bringing along 3 new little films I have just finished—and of which I am particularly pleased since I photographed all 3 myself (never having used anything but a "Brownie" til a year ago). Also I am bringing along some of the actual plastic designs and would like to find someplace to put on an actual demonstration of them with musical accompaniment. If you should know of any

place—art gallery—museum or what-not—where this could be done, I would appreciate it if you would let me know.

So far my trip has been very interesting—Frank Lloyd Wright invited me to come to Taliesin-West in Phoenix to show my films and demonstrate my plastics to his Fellowship Group there. I was most flattered to have him purchase a print of one of my 3 new films for his film library there.

Here in Los Angeles, John [unreadable] of Art and Architecture magazine has been most helpful. He introduced me to Frank Pertz of the Pertz Gallery in Beverly Hills who will be my agent here for my plastics. Pertz also made appointments to have Paramount screen my films. They say they are interested in using my ideas for some of their films—but I am not expecting much. Next week the Los Angeles county museum is screening my films—and I hope to give some actual demonstrations there too. As soon as I can finish up all the details here I hope to go on to San Francisco—which I have long been looking forward to. Never having been there, perhaps you can recommend a good hotel—not too expensive and centrally located in down-town San Francisco.

Hoping to see you soon—I am

Sincerely yours

James E. Davis

Reprinted by permission of Robert A. Haller.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Symon Gould, 3/1/50

The Film Guild
Founded 1923
117 West 48th Street
New York 19, N.Y.
Plaza 7-8362
Circle 5-6194
Cable Address: FilmGuild, N.Y.C.

March 1, 1950

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

Thank you for your letter of February 27 and even though my staff and myself are rather busy, I would be pleased to undertake search for the avant-garde films which were in their day and which I maintain even today were and are high marks in cinema development.

I appreciate the fact you are willing to pay a fee of $25 which would barely cover the expense and time and effort but in view of my still-existent interest in this subject, I would be pleased to cooperate with you upon receipt of this remittance. I am sure I can turn up some very interesting material.

Very truly yours,

Symon Gould *[hw]*
Symon Gould
THE FILM GUILD

SG/h

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

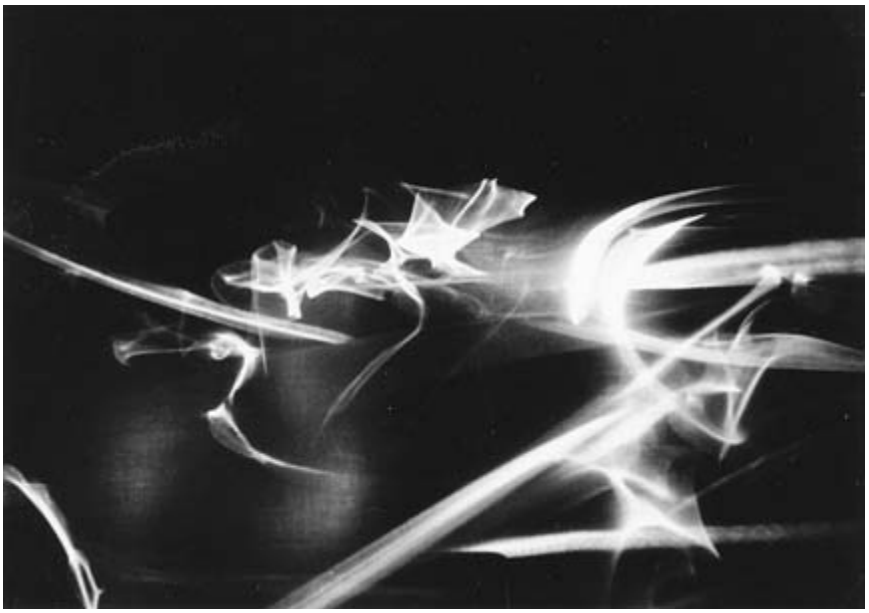

Illustration 22. Light abstraction by Jim Davis. Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Jim Davis, 3/21/50 *[hw]*

The Mayan, A Harris Hotel
3049 W. 8th St. *[hw]*
Los Angeles 5 California

Tue. Mar. 21,50

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:—

Your letter of Mar. 18th received this morning & I am writing to answer your questions.

(1) I personally consider my films as only one of many applications of the medium of illuminated plastics. Therefore I prefer—if possible to demonstrate at least a few of the actual things ("personal appearance" as it were) and then show some of the films. This way the audience can see their medium in its broadest sense—as a new medium for the visual arts in general and see how it may be applied to architectural duration of all kinds, display advertising, general home use, theatrical performance with music etc. etc. And especially since the film loses in certain ways (although it gains in others) I feel the actual demonstration is very important to get the all-over picture.

(2) The films are perhaps the most successful application of this medium—and so far have proved to be my best outlet—. The film can be used as means of 1 recording and reproducing the medium of transparent plastics & 2 as a new type of abstract film technique—complete in itself. And this latter is what most interests me. I find that everyone who sees only the film always wants to know "how it is done." And for this purpose the actual demonstration is most helpful.

(3) I also am interested in the use of the film for color television as visual accompaniment with music. This, I feel, is the future use of the type of abstract film that I can produce.

So—to cover this whole subject in its entirety—I have found the following program fairly successful.

Part I—

(1) Demonstration of 2 different suspended & revolving subjects of transparent plastic—for effects of (a) shadows—and (b) reflections. With musical accompaniment—

(2) Showing of a short color film "Color & Light" which shows a variety of different types of designs of plastic objects—and the effects of shadows—and reflections.

Part II—

(3) Effects of reflected light only—by using a translucent screen—with object & light placed behind the screen. A series of various types of reflections which can be produced.

(4) Showing of a short film "Reflections #8"—in which these effects of reflected light are organized and composed to form a sort of visual symphony. This film is a recent one—similar to my "Light Reflections" which you showed last year.

The above program is always done with musical accompaniment. Since these new films do not yet have sound on them I play records—as I do with the rest of the program.

The above takes about one hour—and if it isn't too long—I would like to add at the end a short ten minute film called "Jersey Fall—Sequence #1"—which shows analogies in nature to the abstract effects in the film. Also it is an attempt on my part to use the film instead of the usual painters tools of brush and pigment to record nature. Having been a painter all my life, I have come to the conclusion that brush & pigment is an obsolete medium—at least for my purposes of expressing the dynamic element in nature. Since the problem of motion & time is present—the film is the only tool with which to record this element in nature. So I am attempting to make little films on nature subjects—as I used to paint pictures—without any story—but rather to be looked at over & over again as one would look at paintings—as expressions of ideas. In these films on nature I try to record as accurately & truthfully as possible, the forms in nature—and in the abstract films—record as accurately & truthfully as possible, the forms <u>invented</u> by human means. Too—I like to show the nature films to point out the fact that my abstract films are not "fantasy"—but rather an attempt to deal with fundamental problems of "reality." Actually the closest analogies to my abstract reflections are to be found in scientific films (growth of cells, development of crystals, explosions on the sun, hidden depths of the sea, etc.). But so far I am not able to make one of these with my limited equipment. At least in these nature films such as "Jersey Fall" one can point out the relationship of my abstractions to the laws of motion in nature—and avoid mistaking them for pure fantasy.

But enough of this. If you wish I can send you these three films to run thru—and you can return them to me—either here or in San Francisco. I will probably leave here around the first of April.

Sincerely yours

Jim Davis

Reprinted by permission of Robert A. Haller.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Arthur Knight, 3/30/50

March 30, 1950

Dear Frank:

I am sorry that I have had to take so long in acknowledging your letter of March 4, but I have had several writing assignments to tie me up. One, by the way, is an experimental film article for the SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE. I hope it meets with your approval, if you get to see it. Incidentally, while I think of it, let me give you here my home address, the safest place for future correspondence. It's 370 First Avenue, Apt. 3H, New York 10. That's because I frankly don't know how much longer we are going to have a school—or, shall I say, how much longer the school will have me. I am completely pleased with my department. I think we have a wonderful staff, and the students have an unparalleled opportunity to learn film making. But the school itself is a mess, dominated by a self-willed, ambitious man who is far less concerned with the welfare of the students—or even of the school itself—than he is with his own productions. As long as he can make theatre, he disregards all costs, financial or in morale. I confess, I shall be quite surprised if we are not completely bankrupt by the end of this semester. I certainly don't see how we can expect to open in the Fall. And I at least don't want to go through the same kind of harrassment for another year. Chalk it up to experience.

Let me get right to your letter and see what I can answer. Rudy Carlson, who arranged the Sucksdorff deal with Fox, has two very nice ones on 16mm, THE DIVIDED WORLD and VALLEY OF DREAMS. While 16mm doesn't do full justice to the quality of Sucksdorff's camera work, and the English narration that Carlson has seen fit to add was for me harshly discordant with the general tone of the films themselves, still they are worth showing. DIVIDED WORLD is perhaps the more typical Sucksdorff of the two. VALLEY OF DREAMS is very Flaherty-ish. You can write Rudolph Carlson at 723 Seventh Avenue, New York 19. Incidentally, Cinema 16 used both of them on a recent program and they were very well received.

Burnford's STORM WARNING used to be listed in the H. W. Wilson EDUCATIONAL FILM GUIDE—through Teaching Film Custodians, as I recall. I don't have a copy here, though, but most libraries do stock it … MICHAELANGELO you can forget about for awhile. The fact that United Artists has taken it for national distribution means that it won't be on 16 for several years … I can only suggest that you write Athena Films again on THE QUIET ONE. It's Milton Perlman, and he does have it. William Levitt of Film Documents, Inc., the producers of the film, might be able to give an assist if you find one is needed. The address: 208 E. 72nd St., New York City.

New pictures? There is one in the works that might interest you, a picture that Lew Jacobs and Paul Falkenberg are doing together for A.-F. Films. It uses the 1848 technique on Lincoln and the Gettysburg address. Miss Kossoff expects to have that ready to go by the end of May … A program of art films might be a good idea, if you haven't used one already. The Museum has VAN GOGH, STONE WONDERS OF NAUMBURG, VAN EYCK, MEMLING and the Italian film by Emmer and Gras—to which could be added the numerous, if less good, films on artists that have been cropping up all over the place in the past year or two … Have you thought of rounding up some of the better TV commercials as examples of applied experimental film work? I am beginning to think that just about the best creative activity in all television goes into these … And you must get the new MacLaren BEGONE, DULL CARE from the National Film Board of Canada. It's terrifically stimulating and much looser than anything he has done before … Paul Falkenberg's A TIME FOR BACH (A.-F. Films) might also find a place on your programs this coming year. Have you ever done an all-music program, a program made up of music films only? I think there are enough good ones around to make it possible … Another picture that fits not too uncomfortably into the "experimental" category is Julian Roffman's HYDE PARK (Official Films), an attempt to convey the life and spirit of Roosevelt through the objects that surrounded him in his home. A heavy, over-arty commentary detracts from the total effect, but it <u>is</u> worth seeing.

As you guessed, the Television idea did fall through. You were wonderful, and Amos Vogel and Rosalind Kossoff were both helpful, but some of the people—Curtis Harrington, for example—took months before they even acknowledged a letter. The problems of getting films and looking at them on "system," the further question of music clearance on some became too difficult. The TV people will just have to go on building their own programs, I'm afraid … If I can help you at all at any time, you know you have only to write me again.

Sincerely,

Arthur *[hw]*

Letter to Grace L. McCann Morley from Frank Stauffacher, 4/50

To: Dr. Morley
Re: Art in Cinema

THE FILM RENTAL PROJECT: Our experimental film unit program (which consists of the Moholy-Nagy films, 1 of Robert Howards, 2 of my own, 1 of Martin Metal's, 1 of Hal McCormick's, plus an occasional additional film), has already had a number of bookings, and is scheduled for three more definitely this month: At Cranbrook Academy, Detroit; Colorado Springs Art Center; Vallejo J.C. for the Northern California Junior College Association's Spring meeting. All of these bookings have come in without any publicity being issued, having apparently been evoked by word-of-mouth. Since I want to start issuing a publicity sheet on these films, I think it necessary for us to come to an agreement concerning the proceeds from them.

There has never been any doubt in my mind that we could not only pay for what expenditures result from setting up this project, but could provide a small income in addition. The cost of setting this up so far has been mainly the cost of having the Moholy-Nagy films reduced from 35mm. to 16mm, which we did, as you remember, and the charge for this was $295.00, half (or $147.00) of which has already been paid out of the existing Art in Cinema money, last November. I had no other reason for recommending that this bill be paid in two parts except that I felt it might be better to wait a short while on the second payment so that we would not drain the Art in Cinema Fund completely at one time. As it turned out there was no need to worry on this score. At this time there are some additional expenses which, however, should mark the end of the cost of setting up the film rental unit.

The additional expense is concerned with Martin Metal's film FORM EVOLUTION which I shot and edited for him. He had an original musical score composed for this film by Leonard Rosenman, and this was performed by five union musicians and recorded on a tape recording. This considerable bill was paid for by Metal. The composition is a good one, and the film itself is good. But existing in this condition, it was only possible to show the film and music here at the museum where we could run the latter on a tape machine. It was impossible to rent it out—the film was an original Kodachrome, and would suffer from many showings. Metal could not stand the cost of having a dupe print with a sound track made. His proposition, to turn the commercial rights of the film over to me, or to the museum, if we could pay for this, puts it in the same category as the Moholy-Nagy films in that we can thus keep any and all proceeds from it. If this film was of mediocre quality I would say not to bother with it, but it does happen to be the kind of abstract film, particularly with the music, that is and will be very popular with film study groups, artists, etc. It seems to me then, that this would be a legitimate use of part of the Art in Cinema Fund, to have this dupe and sound track made, which I did early this month, as there were several requests for its showing—one at Cal. and one at Wayne University, and then there are these playdates coming up. The cost of having this done is attached.

Setting up the rental unit has cost Art in Cinema, thus, $446.03:

Reduction of the Moholy-Nagy films	$294.80
Sound and dupe of "Form Evolution	151.23
	$446.03

Of this, $147.40 has already been paid.

As of now—excluding the monies currently coming in for subscriptions on the coming sixth series—Art in Cinema has approximately $650.00 in the fund. This sum is, of course, the remaining money that was left after all expenses connected with last year's series were paid, including my own percentage.

I would like to clear up the expenses on the rental project as soon as possible in order to start with a clean slate with the coming series' financial matters, providing, of course, it meets with your approval.

The actual handling of this rental film unit will entail quite a bit of work which I expect to do myself. Program notes will accompany the films, inspection for possible breakage, etc. will be frequent, handling the correspondence and keeping the bookings straight, are the items that constitute this task. I would now like to come to a workable and satisfactory agreement as to the division of each $35.00 rental fee that comes in. This is rather difficult to figure accurately because of that unit of films, two of them belong to me, and were financed by myself, while the Howard and the McCormick have been loaned carte blanche to Art in Cinema, as has the other film by Metal, COLOR. These films have entailed no expense to Art in Cinema. Out of every $35.00 rental payment, does $12.00 to the fund, and $23.00 to me seem excessive? In view of the above cost of setting this project up, it does seem a small return to the fund, but I think it will be quite a steady repayment, and at the same time, a fair return for my time and investment in my own films. This matter is certainly open to discussion however.

[A hand-written note on Stauffacher's letter says: "This fee to you seems satisfactory and I am in agreement—also to pay the $298.63 remaining outstanding as detailed above G. Morley April 25, 1950"]

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Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Sixth Series, Spring 1950

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS

ART IN CINEMA Sixth Series

A survey of the most important new directions in experimental film-making, together with some epic avant-garde films of the past.

FRIDAY, MAY 5

1. OCTOBER (TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD) By SERGEI EISENSTEIN. Here are developed the great Russian director's theories of film form in a most concentrated and volcanic masterpiece. **2. COLOR AND LIGHT; REFLECTIONS No. 8; JERSEY FALL, SEQUENCE No. 1, By James Davis.** This famous artist in plastics who produced the film, **Light Reflections** (winner of an award at the Belgium International Film Festival) will present his three new short films in person, and deliver a unique demonstration of their method of production. **3. SODA JERK,** an early one-reeler with **Buster Keaton**.

FRIDAY, MAY 12

1. FIVE INSTRUMENTS WITH OPTICAL SOLO. The film **by Harry Smith**, will serve as the sixth instrument in a be-bop jam session to consist of an expert group in person, on the piano, cornet, valve-trombone, bass and drums. This is the first presentation anywhere of a performance in which the optical images will be tried, not as visualization of the music, but as a basis for its departure. **2. DESTINY (DER MUDE TOD) By Fritz Lang**. The legend of Death and the Maiden in one of the most ambitious of early German epics. **3. BE GONE DULL CARE By Norman McLaren.** The recent work of this eminent Canadian film artist. **4. EYES HAVE IT,** an early one-reeler with **Ben Turpin**.

FRIDAY, MAY 19

1. WEST WIND (VINDEN FRAN VASTER) By Arne Sucksdorff. The beautifully realized poetry of this young Swedish director's camera finds a sympathetic theme in a legend of Lapland. (At the time of this printing we are negotiating for an additional film by Sucksdorff.) **2. RAGAMUFFIN**. Produced by Films Polski; written and directed by **W. Hos.** A Remarkable Polish essay of a child's poignant dream and reality. **3. THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A CAT. Alexander Hammid's** famous documentary, the subject matter of which has restricted its general showing. **4. TOCCATA MANHATTA** and **ROUND TRIP IN MODERN ART By Robert Bruce Rogers.** Two short experiments in optical music. **5. DRIFTERS, By John Grierson.** The film that created the foundation for British documentary. **6. LOOPS By Norman McLaren.** A portion of his experimental reel submitted last year to the Edinburgh Film Festival. **7. DO NOT DISTURB, By L. Moholy-Nagy.** A film based on the theme of jealousy. **8. VAMPYRE,** a remarkable study of this creature by France's renowned **Jean Painleve.**

FRIDAY, MAY 26

1. THE QUIET ONE. Written by **James Agee** and directed by **Sidney Meyers**. First showing locally of this important and much-discussed new achievement in American film history. **2. FANTASY FOR GIRL AND ORCHESTRA By Dick Ham**, with Shirley Winters and the orchestra of Phil Moore. Experiment in fitting images to preconceived sound track. **3. DIMINISHED IRIS,** an experimental dance film **by Josephine Booth. 4. UNTITLED FILM by Charles Maddux. 5. COLOR FRAGMENTS By Elwood Decker.** Part of a work-in-progress. **6. A SHORT PROGRAM OF REJECTED TELEVISION SPOTS.** These rejected commercial spots **(by John Whitney, Denver Sutton, Frank Stauffacher, Dorsey Alexander, Charles Maddux, Keith Monroe, and others)** display a wonderful dynamic visual vitality that is, unfortunately (and apparently) years ahead of its time. **7. JAIL BAIT,** an early one-reeler with **Buster Keaton.**

NOTE: The films have been drawn from a wide variety of sources, from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, from various other distributors, and from the individual artists themselves. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control—shipping

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS

ART IN CINEMA

SIXTH SERIES

A survey of the most important new directions in experimental film-making, together with some epic avant-garde films of the past.

FRIDAY, MAY 5

1. OCTOBER *(TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD)* By SERGEI EISENSTEIN. Here are developed the great Russian director's theories of film form in a most concentrated and volcanic masterpiece. **2. COLOR AND LIGHT; REFLECTIONS No. 8; JERSEY FALL, SEQUENCE No. 1, By James Davis.** This famous artist in plastics who produced the film, **Light Reflections** (winner of an award at the Belgium International Film Festival) will present his three new short films in person, and deliver a unique demonstration of their method of production. **3. SODA JERK,** an early one-reeler with **Buster Keaton.**

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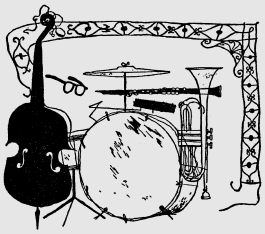

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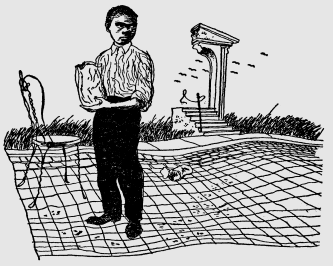

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Art in Cinema is collaborating with the University Extension, University of California, in presenting an additional series of films at Wheeler Auditorium, May 2, May 23, June 8 and June 20, to consist of some of most outstanding films already shown at the San Francisco Showings in past series. For details, see the University Extension bulletin.

Illustration 23. Program announcement for the sixth series, spring 1950. An order blank followed the text.

Illustration 24. Frame-grab of newborn kitten in Alexander Hammid's *The Private Life of a Cat* (1945). Courtesy Rick Prelinger and the Prelinger Archives.

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[An order blank followed.]

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Letter to Elwood Decker from Frank Stauffacher, 5/17/50

May 17, 1950

Dear Elwood,

I'm sorry not to have written sooner than this. With our "live" talent on the first two programs, and the University of Cal. series running simultaneously, I've been frightfully busy.

Jim Davis was a great success on the first program. Our six piece bop group that played with Harry Smith's painted-on-film films was an even greater success, and were held for encores.

Now about your film: I think it is the best thing of its kind that I've seen. It has variety, movement, richness, inventiveness, and it is, to my thinking, far, far better than your LIGHT MODULATOR, and I don't think there's any comparison. I really think it is a fine job. Congratulations. I'm proud to include it on the program. I'll send it back air express the morning of the 27th.

I'd been hoping that you and John [Whitney] could come up for the 28th. In fact I am a little at sea about John's television films which I am adamant about showing since there has been built up such an advanced body of interest in the "rejected television spots" to be shown that night. He wrote me quite some time ago that I could use them, but if he didn't have tracks on them by the 26th, he might be able to come up and synch the records himself. But I haven't heard a word from him since, and I am counting on those items to round out the "rejected tv" business—as the other stuff I have is not so good, and not so experimental. Please get in touch with him for me and tell him how anxious I am about these films. And if you know of any other experiments along the tv commercial line, please let me know right away. I did not think that this particular bit would cause so much anticipation, but I am getting phone calls from advertising people, and station directors who just <u>have</u> to see these experiments that they rejected!

Illustration 25. Norman McLaren at work on *Begone Dull Care* (1949). Courtesy National Film Board of Canada. © National Film Board of Canada. All Rights Reserved.

Your cooperation would be appreciated more than you can imagine!

And congratulations again on the fine film.

Sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Amos Vogel from Frank Stauffacher, 5/27/50

May 27, 1950

Dear Amos,

The films should reach you Monday late, or Tuesday morning, as I cannot send them off until after Sunday due to a showing. Send them back parcel post or express; you do not need to send them back by air just so long as they get here by June 8. In fact, as long as they are in N.Y., I'd appreciate your letting Rosalind Kossoff have them to look at as she wrote and wanted to see them. She could send them back—however you want to do it. Insure them for$300.00.

Both ZIGZAG and SAUSALITO are first prints. If I make another print of either one, particularly the latter, there is a great deal I will alter, mainly in the last half, which does not please me at all; but it

was printed in a hurry for a deadline and there it stays. There is something a little too arty in that part with my wife and the shell, and I wince every time I look at it.

I did not like Dick Ham's film at all, either. In fact we did not run it.

John Whitney's tv spots are quite wonderful, when used for what they are—spots throughout a program. They were a great hit last night.

I am also enclosing Josephine Booth's film, DIMINISHED IRIS, which did not go over too well. Personally, it does not set good with me, and the only saving grace is that she is definitely aware of making a dance film by editing, and not photographing the dance only.

Elwood Decker's COLOR FRAGMENTS is quite an excellent job of its kind, almost the best I have seen. I had to send it and the Whitney spots right back to L.A. this morning for a run at Rohauer's program at the Coronet Theatre next week. Take my word for it, though, you could safely plan on them for bits in your programs.

Rohauer was up here and presented Weegee at the Curran Theatre a couple of weeks ago. Weegee was alright, but Rohauer also presented a program of dance films by someone named Stojak. It was the worst thing I have ever seen, even at home movie clubs. Those dance films, which were taken by this Stojak were really stinkers. So if you ever come across those items, and entertain the idea of previewing them—forget it.

Regarding the FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER by Watson and Webber, I asked Bill Palmer, who owns the print, and he told me to have you write him. His address is: W.A. Palmer & Co., 40 Freemont St., San Francisco.

Harry Smith sent his films to Hilla Rebay to look at as she is giving him a grant to make them, and also financing a three-dimensional film idea of his.

Best,

[Frank Stauffacher]

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

[The Baroness Hilla Rebay was the director of the Museum of Non-Objective Art (now the Guggenheim) in New York. Rebay financed Smith's move to New York City. See Jordan Belson's comments in Scott MacDonald, A Critical Cinema 3 *(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 67–68.]*

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Arthur Knight, "Self-Expression," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, May 27, 1950

A most interesting film phenomenon in postwar America has been the mounting tide of experimental work being carried on outside the Hollywood studios, indeed rejecting completely the standards and aims of the Hollywood film. For these are pictures produced *con amore*, generally privately financed, by young people who seek self-expression in the art that is closest to them, the art they grew up with.

This is not new, this wave of experimental work we now are witnessing. It has happened before, notably in Europe after the First World War and again in this country during the early Thirties. In both instances the films bespoke a profound, personal discontent with motion pictures as they were. Their creators saw artistic problems and potentialities in the medium that the studios had ignored. But where the early avant-garde films were seen only by a few of the initiate in small and special halls, today the audience for these pictures seems to be steadily growing. Every art requires an audience but it is an inherent peculiarity of the film that it should be seen by a great number of people at any one time.

Unquestionably the real spark of this American movement has been the tireless Maya Deren. With her program of half a dozen frankly strange-seeming pictures she organized showings in large cities, visited and lectured at colleges and universities, pamphleteered and publicized until she created an awareness of something new that she had done. Completely personal in both idiom and construction, her pictures have probably repelled as many as they fascinated. But no one has seen a

Deren film without being stimulated by the freshness of its imagery and its sheer technical virtuosity. No one has left a Deren performance without sensing the fact that she had opened new fields for cinema—or, more correctly, had reopened a field that had lain fallow for almost twenty years.

In any case, Miss Deren fought for an audience and won one. Her showings in New York's Provincetown Playhouse became invariable sell-outs and were followed shortly by the formation of Cinema 16, the first organized attempt anywhere to build a mass audience for experimental films. The original Cinema 16 showings were held right in the Provincetown Playhouse (seating capacity 200). But in the past three years Cinema 16 has grown from a handful of the curious, seeing an occasional program at the Playhouse, to a substantial throng requiring five repetitions of each program in two large uptown theatres. Attendance now is by subscription only: audiences sign up for a series of eight programs, seeing a complete new show each month.

The surprising thing is that today there are so many experimental pictures around that the Cinema 16 people can pick and choose—and even reject—in building their programs. This has come about largely through the enthusiastic support and assistance of the lively San Francisco Museum of Art. The success of the Deren pictures suggested to a group of young San Franciscans the possibility of an entire series of such films for their Museum. Late in 1946 they offered Art in Cinema, a series of ten programs. Only two of them, however, included any contemporary experimentals. For the main, Art in Cinema explored origins, trends, and techniques.

At the present moment the Museum is preparing its sixth Art in Cinema series. Many of the pictures this time will come from native talent—from James Broughton, Sidney Peterson, Jordan Belson, Frank Stauffacher, Leonard Tregillus, Hal McCormick. More will come from Hollywood, where another earnest and able experimental group has sprung up around Curtis Harrington, Kenneth Anger, and the Whitney brothers. The two groups keep close contact with each other, exchanging films, ideas, and criticism.

Now, just what are these experimental films? What are they like and what differentiates them from the Hollywood product? Perhaps the most important difference—more important than any camera trickery or Freudian symbol—is the fact that each of these pictures is a completely personal expression by the artist who made it. Whether a projection of his dream world or a working out of his theory of abstract art, it is the creation of an individual, the product of a single mind. Inevitably, there is a certain unevenness about these pictures. Not all are of equal merit, either structurally, thematically, or technically. There is even an important reservation about the term "experimental" in the minds of the people who make these films: some hold to the literal meaning of the word and frankly offer their pictures as examples of work in progress, experimental in the sense of working out a problem. Others, like Maya Deren and James Broughton, present their films as complete works of art, with "experimental" used to describe their general nature. Their audiences must be prepared to share the special interests of the film makers themselves, interests that range through abstract design and music, psychology, psychoses, and, perhaps above all else, the problems of interpreting these interests through the motion-picture camera.

Actually, experimental films take many forms but it might be convenient to divide them simply into the abstract or nonobjective film and the subjective film. This admittedly arbitrary differentiation serves a double function by describing both their content and their purposes. Historically, the nonobjective films came first with Hans Richter's "Rhythmus 21" (1921), a study in the dynamic rhythms and patterns of rectangles and squares in constant countermotion. Throughout the 1920's Walter Ruttmann, Man Ray, Fernand Léger, and Oskar Fischinger all carried on abstract experiments in a number of different forms, from Léger's piecing together the dissected motion of people and machines into a "Ballet Mécanique," to Fischinger's laborious frame-on-frame drawings of geometric forms synchronized to music.

Fischinger, working now in Hollywood—but not in the studios—, has become a sort of living link between the European antecedents of the nonobjective film and the current creators in this form. Perhaps foremost in this group today are the Whitney brothers, winners of two Guggenheim grants. Working with mathematical precision on equipment of their own devising, they have created a series of brief abstract films in which strange, luminous forms flash to a weird and unearthly accompaniment of synthetic sound, with an occasional moment of perfect congruence that is immensely satisfying. In "Dime Store" Dorsey Alexander has created still another ballet mécanique by moving ten-cent-store objects in gay, humorous patterns to the music of Offenbach; he has also done a couple of black and white abstract improvisations that somehow, in their rhythm and delicacy, suggest the expressive line of a Paul Klee print. In Martin Metal's "Color," oil paints and water colors ooze through prepared screen backgrounds for moments of striking, if adventitious, beauty.

Frank Stauffacher's "Zigzag" is composed from the night patterns of neon signs, the shots cut rhythmically to Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto."

In the East Douglass Crockwell, a successful commercial artist, began to search around for media that would lend themselves readily to individual self-expression on film. He has worked out techniques using thick, manipulative paints on glass and molded wax forms that move against strong, colorful backgrounds. The pictures that have come out of his experiments—"Glens Falls Sequence," "Fantasmagoria," "The Long Bodies"—are at once humorous, winningly naive, and provocative in their use of materials. Francis Lee, a young photographer-painter, has worked out yet another technique for himself, combining moving cut-outs with painted backgrounds that shift and change from frame to frame as new colors and forms are added. Lee, also a Guggenheim Fellow, has completed three short films, "Le Bijou," "The Idyll," and "1941." In "Light Reflections" and "Paintings and Plastics," Jim Davis, whose medium is plastics, plays colored lights upon his mobile creations and photographs the handsome, shifting patterns that result.

In all of these—and there are many more—it is immediately apparent that the artist is at least as much concerned with the technical processes of creation as with the artistic impact of the creation itself. In the subjective films, on the other hand, while technique still counts high, the emphasis is rather on shaping an expressive whole. Drawing from such precedents as the Dali-Bunuel surrealist classic "Un Chien Andalou" and René Clair's ballet fantasy "Entr'Acte," the present-day makers of these films follow the same line of dream symbol and free association in the creative process. When Sidney Peterson and James Broughton made "The Potted Psalm," for example, they worked originally from a script, but then, shooting completed, shuffled and reshuffled their strips of film into a pattern that was virtually and psychologically satisfying to them. In "The Cage" Peterson resorts to obvious camera trickery—slow motion, rapid motion, reverse motion, superimposition—but to a completely serious end. In a series of sharply visual sequences, heightened by the very strangeness of the camera work, he depicts the artist's flight from authoritarian influences. In quite another vein, "Odd Fellow's Hall," a satire on murder mysteries by Denver Sutton and Leonard Tregillus, exploits these same irrational potentialities of the camera.

On the other hand, while employing a more routine camera technique, such films as Curtis Harrington's "Fragment of Seeking," Joseph Vogel's "House of Cards," and James Broughton's "Mother's Day" all manage to create lingering, haunting impressions through striking compositions of symbol-laden objects (a framed picture of Father, a derby hat, an umbrella, a knife) within the frame. Even Gregory Markopoulos's "Psyche," based on Pierre Louys' novel and telling a formal story, narrates on the subconscious level, employing dream imagery throughout.

What comes out of all this are pictures that can be felt rather than understood. Their meanings would be impenetrable on the level of consciousness unless one resorted to a psychoanalytic technique, charting them as you would a case history. They are tied together by a continuity of mood and feeling rather than by any formal story line. Frequently they are shocking—sometimes merely by their strangeness, more often as a deliberate attempt to jolt the audience to a greater intensity of awareness.

Obviously, the degree of participation is a personal thing, dependent on each spectator's own equipment and background. But, inevitably, after the first rush of enthusiasm and interest a sifting process does begin. Once the special idiom of these films has been mastered, once the initial strangeness has passed, it becomes possible to separate the talented from the phony, the sincere from the precious, the creative artist from the merely ambitious. Fortunately, since virtually all experimental work in this country is done on the relatively cheap, relatively accessible 16mm film stock, organizations and even individuals anywhere can rent and study these pictures easily.

—ARTHUR KNIGHT.

(Arthur Knight is chairman of the Film Department of the Dramatic Workshop in New York and film commentator on radio station WFDR.)

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Elwood Decker from Frank Stauffacher, 6/7/50

June 7, 1950

Dear Elwood,

I'm sorry that I missed on the address. I guess when an address goes over four numerals I can't depend on my surface senses. However, I'm happy to know that the films got to you in time for your showing.

COLOR FRAGMENTS is, I think, about the best of its kind that I have seen. Among other important reasons for this—outside of the very interesting shapes and forms, as well as color—is that it is not too long, and each shot appears on the screen precisely the right length of time. I definitely do not think that you ought to make this film longer. There is an exact time limit to abstract forms on the screen beyond which an audience just will not bear. I know this from experience, and it has been demonstrated here at our showings time and time again. Longer developments may be interesting to you and me, and persons particularly concerned with this sort of thing, but a general audience—even an audience looking for abstract films—just won't take it.

In this same vein, allow me to say that I think Raymond Rohauer made a big mistake in programming so many abstract films in such lump fashion, on that program. I, for one, could never get away with it. I would have no audience. It is also unfair to each film on the program; it does not set one film off against the other the way it is necessary. Each film loses a great deal, and the spectator comes away from such a program weary, confused, and unable to know what he saw. It may be possible to present all of Fischinger's work at once, but the majority of his work is not mentally demanding, but quite the contrary. You just can't present experimental films to even an intelligent audience—and expect them to come back again—by non-selection of programs.

Please pardon this tirade—it isn't really. Yet this is one of my most concerned matters as, to my mind, it has a great deal to do with public acceptance of our particular field. I have lost a great many patrons by assaulting them with an excess of abstract films. They never return.

Can I show COLOR FRAGMENTS at the University of Cal. on June 20? Let me know.

Again, you understand my feelings about the above, I hope.

[Frank Stauffacher]

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Rosalind Kossoff from Frank Stauffacher, 6/14/50

June 14, 1950

Rosalind Kossoff
A.F. Films, Inc.
1600 Broadway
New York 19, N.Y.

Dear Rosalind,

Thank you so much for your very interesting letter of the 8th and for your most cognitive remarks on the films. It is unfortunate that Amos Vogel did not send them to you sooner. I had sent them to him via air express at his request, at least twelve days before the 6th, and asked him to send them on to you, which I assumed he would do after a few days—not ten. But that is okay—except that I'm sorry you did not have them a little longer. I am happy to know that you are enough interested in both SAUSALITO and ZIGZAG to want to look at them again, and I will send them back as soon as I can.

I am puzzled that you say, "it is unfortunate that ZIGZAG is not sound"—because it is sound. Could your projector-amplifier not have warmed up during the projection? In fact, the sound part of it was really the most important part, and that is where the experimental factor of the film came in, as I tried to cut all of that neon material directly to the sound track, and play one against the other, with

use of black areas on the screen while certain phrases on sound take place, and vice versa. Could this mean that SAUSALITO may not have been sound to you also?—since it is on the same reel.

I was very pleased with your reaction to SAUSALITO because that is really what I tried to do—put together a kind of factual report out of various bits of personally observed images and sounds. As I explained in a letter to Vogel, it is a print made for a deadline last Fall and I have not been able to get around to making a new and corrected print; there is much in it that makes me wince every time I look at it—particularly most of the SONG section with my wife and the seashell. The continuity and meaning does not come off very well. I could improve it a lot in a new print, and I intend to do so as soon as possible. But both of the films have been offered simply as experiments and as such, they have been well received: especially by people who know Sausalito, with its curious combination of seascape, pseudo-picturesqness, gossipy inhabitants, old wooden houses, and romantic past. However, Sausalito inhabitants don't go for it at all, which is a feather in its cap, as I was definitely trying to play down the usual features of the place.

The Moholy-Nagy BLACK WHITE AND GRAY is not too important, except as a sort of landmark in the abstract film. Although Mrs. Moholy-Nagy claims that it was made with a great deal of composition in its over-all construction, I simply can't see it. To me it is merely a group of rather haphazard shots of Moholy's Light Machine, which he utilized to better advantage in a sequence for Korda in THINGS TO COME. At any rate, the complete scenario for this film is in his book, "Vision in Motion," although you wouldn't recognize the film after reading the scenario.

The Booth film [*Diminished Iris* by Josephine Booth] left most of our audience without an opinion, too, I'm afraid. My reaction to it right away is that it is much too arty. The School of Modern Dance is apt to look terribly arty on the screen. But I think that she was really trying to make a dance film by being aware of cutting and the role the camera must play in such a film in order to make it a dance film, and not just a record of a dance. There are to my experience, very few good dance films in which the film technique is part of the choreography.

Elwood Decker's film COLOR FRAGMENTS is very good, I think, of its kind. I urged him, in a letter, not to make it any longer. He seems to want to make it into a film—an abstract film—of about feature length, and the thought is terrifying. He claims that this small bit (about 300 ft.) is only a minor part of a much longer film. I'll write to him, however, and ask him to send it to you for a screening.

The problem of showing experimental films to an audience unaccustomed to them is a problem, I know. As a general rule I do not run up against it so badly since all of the audiences who come to Art in Cinema come because they <u>want</u> to see experimental films. Those persons who do not know what they're in for just get carried along in the very keen interest of the rest of the audience. But when an entire audience is cold to this subject it can be pretty grim. Even so, we always hand out program notes with plain discussions of the intent and ideas behind the films and, where possible, we have someone qualified get up and deliver a few words of enlightenment. That is why Jim Davis' demonstration was so good. It was interesting and beautiful to everyone, and the films then had more identity. But I realize our showings are carried on under the wing of an institution and the audiences who come are specialized audiences. And I have found this true in Berkeley, too, where the University crowd constitute a strange ground to me. However, the showings there have been attended by approximately 800 each time, and they have responded with very gratifying reaction.

It may be that our programs do contain enough of solid satisfaction to warrant placing within them the more puzzling kind of experiment. I mean that FARRIBRIQUE, or 1848, or even NOSFERATU are absorbing to almost anyone but the most bubble-gum-chewing and popcorn-eating audiences—and perhaps even to some of them. But these are films that are also slightly "different." They have an odd touch, something not usually found. In a sense, they almost set the stage for a few films of a more puzzling and experimental nature. At least that is always the way I see the making up of our programs. I am aware that even a very intelligent audience does not like a complete program of experimental films in the strict meaning of that term. It is indeed a tough problem. By all means I would recommend sending a general statement of purpose and intent. Something along the lines of Arthur Knight's article in the May 27 Saturday Review of Literature would be fine, if condensed.

I think there are certain kinds of "experimental" films that need no justification, although they can certainly be classified as experimental. I mean such a film as McLaren's BEGONE DULL CARE. It is satisfying to everyone, and to people who have never seen this sort of thing before, it acts usually as a revelation. But there are not many films so entirely complete and appealing to the senses of sight and sound abstractly as McLaren's.

None of this is of much help to you, I'm sure. It is definite in my mind that we should not alienate people by giving them the idea that these experimental films are pretentiously arty—which they often are. It is a very difficult problem.

Yes, Amos Vogel wrote to me just before leaving for Europe. I also hope he is successful in bringing back some European examples, and I'm sure he will do so as I don't think he will make that trip without having something to show for it.

Once again, thank you for your interest and cooperation. It is a pity that we cannot have a long discussion about the problem of the audience and the experimental film. Perhaps one day soon we can have such a talk.

Kindest personal regards,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Amos Vogel, 9/4/50

[. . .]

September 4, 1950

[. . .]

Dear Frank:

After a three months' stay in Europe that took me to all the Western European countries, including Denmark, I have just returned to New York. Needless to say, I am not very happy to be back, both because of the load of work which awaits me, as well as because anyone who has even in the slightest gotten used to the rhythm of life in cities such as Paris does not find it very easy to re-adjust to New York.

My trip has been very successful in several respects. Not only did I take 12 American experimental films with me and present them very successfully to audiences in England, France, Holland, Denmark and at the Venice Film Festival (where we won 3 out of 5 prizes) but I also was able to get in touch with the various experimentalists and independent producers and to make important contacts. I have brought with me several films for exhibition and distribution in the United States, including Eli Lotar's AUBERVILLIERS with lyrics by Prevert, music by Kosma (Prix International de Poesie, Internation Film Festival, Belgium 1949), Storck's PAUL DELVAUX film, which you must show, if you have not as yet, Franju's LE SANG DES BETES, which, believe it or not is a "poetic"(!) documentary about Paris slaughter houses, also a must for your series, and LAFCADIO, an amateur experimental film, stream of consciousness style. Quite apart from this, at least 10 more films are in various stages of negotiation and will be available here sooner or later. I think I have laid very important foundations for a more active interchange of films internationally, provided a general war does not intervene.

Right now, we are in the midst of setting up our programs for the winter, and since I had so little time due to my trip, I had to take a chance and set a date for SAUSALITO without consulting you. Since this date and copy for the film is already at the printers, I very strongly urge you to make every effort to make the film available to me at that date. Please return one signed copy of the enclosed standard confirmation sheet by return air mail. What will the rental be?

Also keep me advised of your plans for the new season. If you have any series already set up and can send me your program, I would appreciate it.

Incidentally, we have arranged for a joint venture between New York University and Cinema 16 which consists of a 2 semester course on the Experimental Film, with special emphasis on contemporary American films. The lecturer is Dr. George Amberg, whom you may know.

Sincerely,

Amos *[hw]*

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Jim Davis from Frank Stauffacher, 10/4/50

Oct.4, 1950

Dear Jim,

I am really ashamed to even show my face after neglecting to answer your letters for so long that you had to write your recent one in which you say that lest the Museum not know how to accept your gift of one of the plastic objects … etc. I feel immensely embarrassed; please forgive me. Of course the Museum was delighted to have the gift, believe me. It has been my fault entirely that you did not receive ackowledgement and thanks until now. All I can offer for justification is that I have been terribly busy away from the Museum, and when I did come in once a week or so to read mail, I'd place it in the "to answer" section, and then neglect to answer it promptly. Meanwhile the months go by so fast …

As for your other objects and the spotlight, they are all right here in the closet where we placed them that Saturday you left. Shall I continue to hold them until you do return? It is, of course, absolutely no inconvenience either way. They do not take up a bit of room, if you wish to leave them here for the time being.

You do not seem, at least when you first mentioned it—very enthused about tackling the Marin film. Yet by now you are probably deeply concerned with it, and I do hope it goes well. It is a superb project, almost incredible.

My current connection with the film world has grown thin for the summer. Not much correspondence; not much active interest, really. Letters pile up (as you see); I acquire a sympathetic headache whenever I approach that roll top desk of mine. Yet the interest is there, perhaps slumbering until the evenings get darker a little earlier and there is a zest in the air. However, I have decided not to put on a film series this Fall, but wait until early next Spring when I hope I'll have more time, and a better selection of films to choose from. And a film of my own, I hope. Broughton will have a new one by then also.

I have not heard a word from Rosalind, but perhaps if I look through my unanswered letters I will discover the reason why no word from her in the form of a letter still to be answered. In this connection I am somewhat amused, if puzzled, to see Brandon giving such a big build-up to that film of Mr. Ian Hugo entitled AI-YE. They have asked if I would preview it, or present it, here on the Coast. I do know through Broughton that Rosalind just would not touch it when he (Hugo) was looking for a distributor. She just couldn't stand it.

Let me again say right here how much we all appreciated your being here on Art in Cinema last May, how deeply grateful I am, personally, to you, for waiting here almost a month so that you could put on your demonstration for Art in Cinema. I have never really adequately thanked you for what turned out to be the most brilliant and successful of all Art in Cinemas.

[text missing] those extra clippings for you from the San Francisco News—the article by Nan White. In one of your letters you asked me for her address. You could reach her, care of the San Francisco News, Howard Street, S.F.

There is little other news to tell from this end. I have not seen Metal or Sibyl except a few brief times. Occasionally an interesting film person comes through town and I have lunch with him. Jay Leyda, the translator and editor of Eisenstein's two books was here last week and, like a gong, sort of kindled my enthusiasm for film matters once again, at the end of the summer. The Coronet Theater in Hollywood ran my own films last July—with apparent success. Enough, anyhow, for Harold Leonard, the U.S. correspondent of Sight and Sound to want to do an article on them—which always makes one feel rather good. Vogel of Cinema 16 will show SAUSALITO in November. I've written a rough script for an experimental documentary on San Francisco which I think will be good if I can ever get going on it.

I would be very interested to hear more of the progress on the Marin film. When do you think you will be returning to L.A.?

Again, please forgive my tardiness …

Sincerely,

[Frank Stauffacher]

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[In the end, Davis did two films about painter John Marin: John Marin *(1950) and* Pertaining to Marin *(1950), made from out-takes of the previous film. For further information on Davis (and Davis and Marin), see Robert A. Haller, ed.,* Jim Davis: The Flow of Energy *(New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1992), and* Jim Davis: Notes on John Marin and Frank Lloyd Wright, *edited by Robert A. Haller (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1997). Stauffacher's documentary on San Francisco, which he finished in 1952, is* Notes on the Port of St. Francis.*]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Jim Davis, 10/7/50 *[hw]*

[. . .]

Oct. 7—'50

Dear Frank:—

Well—Thank God you are still alive—and well! I really was beginning to think that you were dead. Seriously—so I'm most relieved to have your letter today.

You might as well keep the spot-light & the other plastics until I can get back to the west coast again. I don't know just when that will be—for the Marin film drags on & on and I can't leave before that is finished. But I would leave tomorrow if I could—I have no desire to stay here longer than absolutely necessary.

The Marin film worries the hell out of me—for I feel my responsibility—and my lack of experience & technical training—so much. But Marin has been wonderful—and after two trips to Maine this summer and living in the same house with him—he is my favorite person—as well as my favorite painter. There is no one to compare him with.

I sent out to Wright my little film on "Taliesin-West" [*Taliesin-West*, 1950]. It isn't much of a film—as I shot it all in about two hours. But—to my amazement—Wright likes it—and has written a little essay—especially to be narrated with the film. So now I am getting a sound track made for it (both narration—and a Beethoven quartet, because of Wright's fondness for Beethoven)—so that Rosalind

can distribute it. I finally got the sound track done for "Color & Light #1" so that is out of the way and in Rosalind's capable hands now.

She loves your "Sausalito"—which I see "Cinema 16" is showing. But I still think someone should do something with "Zig-Zag" which I liked so much. What new things are you doing?

Well—enough of this—but I was very glad—and relieved—to hear from you. If and when I get west again I'll look forward to seeing you. And pray for me on the Marin film—I need it.

Special best—

Jim

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Arthur Knight, 10/28/50

[. . .]

October 28, 1950.

Dear Frank:

Thanks for all your kind words re SATURDAY REVIEW. I am impressed by the drawing power of that magazine. Maya Deren dropped me a note to say the same thing, and Rosalind Kossoff noted an upjump (Orwell type word) in her mail after the piece appeared. Which pleases me very much. Now Cecile Starr, the regular 16mm reviewer for SRL, tells me that one of the publishing houses wants to put her columns for the past few years between covers—and she wants to include my article. So there may be more inquiries in the future. The book is due in early Spring.

Anent ART IN CINEMA, Amos Vogel has returned from Europe with a whole flock of new experimentals. He hasn't announced them yet, but I am sure you can get a good start on your next program right there. (I now turn over your letter and discover that you are working on just that already. My, you San Franciscans work fast!) Most interesting to you will probably be the group of Danish experimentals hand-drawn on film, a la MacLaren. I might suggest as an interesting feature for your series, PARIS 1900 (Oxford Films—35mm only at present). It was badly received by the New York critics, but I think it has a good deal more merit than the recent American compilation films—more insight into the feel of the times, more social purpose, and of course the special attraction of the artists: Caruso, Chevalier, Rejane, Bernhardt, Renoir, Debussy, Gide, Rodin and many more. They all appear briefly, but cast their spell over the proceedings … I look forward to SAUSALITO at the next Cinema 16 presentation.

Do you know the films of Robert Bruce Rogers? When I got back last month I found a long, irate letter from him—probably inspired by the SRL article—directed not at me, but I guess at people in general who don't think about avant garde films the way that he does: "more related to music, more related to dance, more related to a phonograph recording or to a moment of an 'all-over' state of being—more related to any of these than it ever will be to 'film' or 'cinema' in any customary sense … " I have yet to see any of his pictures (Rosalind has two of them), but I wonder if even they can make clear just what he is getting at. Anyway, they might be something for next time too.

I left the Dramatic Workshop at the end of the Spring semester. It was a wonderful possibility that ended in disaster. The people who ran the school were, to put it as simply as possible, a bunch of crooks. I guess opportunists would be the nicer way of saying it, but it comes out the same way. Instead of taking money that should have been used to pay teachers, they used the money, putting on productions that cost too much for a school of our size, hoping that Piscator would gain Broadway attention and, presumably, employment. All he succeeded in doing was piling up a $42,000 debt, of which $25,000 was teacher salaries. I could see no reason to continue—or possibility, for I would never ask my friends to work for nothing. Now I am teaching up at City College and doing free-lance publicity work until something interesting turns up. It pays the rent.

All luck on the Guggenheim. You know I will give your project all possible support if they ask me—for whatever that may be worth. I have put my name to several at one time or another, but as best I can recall, of the lot only Francis Lee ever came through to the finals.

All the best,

Arthur *[hw]*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Arthur Knight from Frank Stauffacher, 11/1/50

[. . .]

November 1, 1950

Dear Arthur,

Thanks so much for your letter of Oct 28th, and with it, the always interesting, always helpful stimulation that your letters have always had. It is one of my lamentations that those of us here in this area who are really interested—one way or another—in film, are really so far removed from any meaningful contact with it; not, mind you, with the films themselves, but with a body of mutually interested critical people.

Yes, I do know the films of Robert Bruce Rogers. Rosalind had sent me two of them before our last series in May, but I felt that the ground he tried to cover had been covered quite a few times before by much more competent artists. I mean: it is pretty hard to beat Norman McLaren when it comes to scratching and painting directly on the film-surface. Our own Harry Smith is no sloutch either in this respect. He works directly on 35mm., spraying it, masking it, doodling on it, but in a really organized way. One of the highlights of our series last May was the presentation of Harry's films with the accompaniment of a live "bop" group. The event made notice and even a picture in Downbeat Magazine. To get back to Rogers, what you quote from him is exactly the sort of correspondence I've had from him also. It is a pity that his energy and his obviously sincere attitude toward film creation is wasted on something that, in its very limited way, has been far superceded. Yet it is one of the wonderful things about people working in the experimental film that they might suddenly turn up with a real incredible idea.

[Frank Stauffacher]

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Amos Vogel, 11/28/50

[. . .]

November 28, 1950

Dear Frank,

While trying to make out your check, I suddenly discovered that no price had been set. Will you let me know what is involved, keeping in mind that what with the draft and higher living costs, C 16 isn't doing so well; and that the film [*Sausalito*] was shown on one less date than originally planned (due to insufficient enrollment)—it was shown on November 12, 22, 26. Send me a bill & I'll pay you immediately.

The reaction was surprisingly good—applause at every showing, with the usual few hisses for any experimental film thrown in. Lewis Jacobs was quite impressed. Richter left before I could get his reaction. Harrington & Markopoulos also saw it.

Illustration 26. Announcement for the premiere of Ian Hugo's *Ai-Ye* (1950), 11/9/50.

The San Francisco Museum of Art
presents a special program of

ART IN CINEMA

Thursday Nov. 9th/50 - 8:00 p.m.

Premiere showing in the West of
IAN HUGO'S

Ai-Ye

Venice International Film Festival & Cleveland
Documentary Film Festival awards

The elements of Ai-Ye (Mankind), by the noted etcher & engraver Ian Hugo, consist of footage shot in various parts of the South American Coast. From this rich and ageless material he has created a beautiful, moving allegory of Man's universal story through the milleniums. This vivid, experimental documentary film has a sound accompaniment of drums and native chants improvised by Osbourne Smith.

The producer's wife, the eminent writer
ANAIS NIN
will be present to introduce & discuss the film.

Additional experimental films of the greatest interest will also be presented on this program.

Admission to the public 90¢
to Museum Members 60¢

What surprised me was the amount of laughter it provoked. The eye looking at you—the man behind the pole—the man with the violin case (?) walking in slow motion—were sources of endless merriment. To me, it was far more a nostalgic and emotionally subdued reminder and recreation of a mood connected with a place to make me laugh heartily. After having seen the film so many times, I can also be more specific in stating that a) I consider it definitely as one of the very much more successful contemporary experimental films b) I think there are sequences that should be shortened or changed. The introduction of the eye, etc (see above) although quite intentionally introduced, breaks the prevailing mood too completely. In addition, some of the sound track changes are too abrupt.—Incidentally practically everyone I've spoken to, liked "landscape" better than "song."

It is also interesting to note that the film serves very well as an introduction to the experimental film—i.e. people find it possible to understand the manipulation of realistic elements in a creative manner & to identify with your intentions. This is far less possible for the average audience with a Peterson film let us say.

Let me know what you think about the above. How are your plans for a spring series coming? There may be a delay on the availability of SANG DES BETES due to difficulties I'm having with the French producers who insist on making a spoken English version, instead of subtitles, not realizing the limited earning possibilities of such a film in America.

Sincerely,

Amos *[hw]*

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*[*Sausalito *is divided into two sections: "Landscape" and "Song."]*

Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Hilary Harris, 12/1/50

Dec. 1st 1950

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher,

After seeing your very fine film, "Sausalito" I am anxious to find out about its rental information. At the suggestion of Mr. Amos Vogel of Cinema 16 I am writing you directly.

I represent the Silvermine Guild Film Society, a non-profit organization. Our showings consist mostly of films in the "experimental" catagory. We would like very much to show your film on Fri. March 16, 1951.

Please let me know as soon as possible the price of renting "Sausalito" and its availability on the above date.

Most Sincerely,

Hilary Tjader Harris *[hw]*

Hilary Tjader Harris
9 Tokeneke Drive East
Darien, Conn.

Letter to Grace L. McCann Morley from Frank Stauffacher, 1/8/51

Jan. 8, 1951

To: Dr. Morley
Re: Art in Cinema

For the past two months—ever since our last single program of Art in Cinema in Nov.—I have [been] involved in my first sizable contract in making advertising films, and it was necessary for me to neglect, temporarily, the subject of Art in Cinema for the coming year. I had hoped that we could plan a series for February as that was the time when it seemed possible for me to get a number of outstanding films. Now that I have more free time, and after looking over neglected correspondence, it seems more feasible to present it in March. After talking about this with Mr. Tyrell, it appears that March would not conflict with his plans for the Tuesday night films.

Among the numerous reasons I find for the March showing—aside from the fact that nothing is as yet booked—is that of giving a little more time to a number of local productions for their completion, so that they can be included in the series. James Broughton is in the midst of a film that promises to be extraordinary; Harry Smith is working on a three-dimensional film; and I would like to finish mine.

I made a trip to Los Angeles last week for, among other reasons, renewing contact with film people of our interests—Fischinger, Man Ray, the Whitneys, Jay Leyda, etc. I met the U.S. correspondent of the British film periodical, Sight and Sound. He had seen our films when they were shown at the Coronet Theatre last Fall, and is anxious to do an article on the whole San Francisco experimental group. It is gratifying to know that they think of us [as] a more or less cohesive and interesting group of film-experimentalists. However, as a matter of fact, the San Francisco group has produced nothing substantial for over a year due to the high cost of production and a lack of funds. I mention this in connection with extending the series dates to March in order to have new, finished San Francisco products, as well as other films. And the activity of a series seems to focus and stimulate the whole movement.

March has five Friday evenings. I thought it would be best to skip the first one, on the 3rd, leaving time between the sending out of the announcements on the 1st. This leaves the 9th, 16th, 23rd, and the 30th.

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Amos Vogel, 1/9/51

[. . .]

January 9, 1951

Dear Frank:

All our films except SANG DES BETES will be available to you in March. I'm having difficulties with the producer of SANG DES BETES re an English version. Without going into the complicated details, here's the set-up: you could show the film if a) you'd be willing to run the French 35mm print, no English titles (*[hw]* but I can send you translation of script. In any case, commentary is rather important in this film.) on your first March program and if b) you could have the museum pay around $40 for the showing. Our expenses for this film have been & will continue to be terrific and due to the very special nature of the film, it will be almost impossible to recoup them. SANG DES BETES is a sensation; needless to say, it will probably drive away your customers, unless they are the true avant-garde. Personally, I consider it one of the best short films made anywhere during the past 10 years.

AUBERVILLIERS—no English titles. But I have a complete script plus cues, which we used at our showing this month, i.e. we had a speaker who broke in over the mike on the French soundtrack. Very successful. You'd have to rehearse once or twice.

LAFACADIO and ELIZABETH—definitely not "great," rather crude & a bit amateurish, but very interesting as examples of European work. Worth showing with these reservations clearly indicated.

SHIPYARD—sound quality not too good on our print, unfortunately. You'll have to adjust volume often during showing, since commentator & various important background noises & music are not on the same level.

You should have let me know that there was a problem concerning Berkeley Cinema Circle. Needless to say, under no circumstances will we give "firsts" to anybody but you. This includes the present titles.

Incidentally, we will no longer rent to Berkeley at all. They just lost a print of GEOGRAPHY OF THE BODY—claim they sent it uninsured parcelpost, ie it cannot even be traced at the p.o. Can they be trusted? Are they in any way connected with Rohauer and the "type of deals he engages in[″] according to you? If the print of GEOGRAPHY happens to turn up somewhere or if you know or can find something out about this matter, I'd be very grateful. This is the first print that has gotten lost since we started & it's peculiar that it should have been the GEOGRAPHY with its nudes etc.

I'm enclosing new supplement & old catalogs. Do you want to show any other of our films?

Sincerely,

Amos *[hw]*

PS—PLEASE BOOK FOR SPECIFIC DATES IMMEDIATELY *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Amos Vogel.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Amos Vogel from Frank Stauffacher, 1/13/51

January 13, 1951

Dear Amos,

Due to previous commitments on dates, my series has been forced up to March 30, April 6, April 13, and April 20. I am at present having trouble arranging dates and films together. However, as it looks now, I'd like to have AUBERVILLIERS and SHIPYARD from you on April 6, also the 9 minute Danish group, THE TEAR, etc., on that date also. On April 13, LAFCADIO, ELIZABETH, ESCAPE and ROOM STUDIES 1–4.

It isn't possible for me to show 35mm this Spring at the museum because the projectors have been removed, and new ones won't be available. However, I am planning a series at Berkeley, as I did last year, and then, of course, 35mm projection will be available. Nevertheless, it is distressing that I can't use SANG DES BETES here at the Museum because of that. I don't mind the absence of an English commentary. I would be willing to pay $40.00, as you mention. Here's a proposition: What would a reduction print cost in New York? Naturally you don't have the negative, and a reduction from a positive always suffers, and perhaps you have no right to make a reduction in the first place. But I was thinking that we might be able to foot the bill for such a reduction, which would leave you with a 16mm print of it for nothing, and it would be our payment for merely showing it here. At any rate, I notice that, in connection with this film, you say that I can show it—the 35mm—if I use it on my first March program. Does that mean it will not be available later in March or early in April for a Berkeley showing? Follow these questions closely, as I earnestly want to show this film here if I possibly can, and I'm willing to pay a reasonable premium for doing so.

Next: You didn't mention THE WORLD OF PAUL DELVAUX in your last letter, and this is another one that I am especially eager to include. Let me know about this, too.

Thank you so much for respecting my natural desire to show "firsts" here in this region. I do appreciate that. Although the Berkeley Cinema Circle really does not offer a great deal of competition, still, they are close enough to take the wind out of my sails if they could—and don't think they wouldn't, either, if it were possible. I do not know them very well. They are composed of a group of students from Cal., and they seem to be doing okay, that is, they have a membership of a couple of hundred, and their programs and financial arrangements seem to be satisfactory. I started out by wishing them well enough in their enterprise because the kind of films that they planned to show were not exactly my line, and such a group is a good thing. But then they try to encroach on the experimental field, without much understanding at all, in the most brazen and studentish manner, and I slightly resented that. I don't think they are capable of stealing prints—as in the case of GEOGRAPHY OF THE BODY—they don't appear that underhanded. But then one never knows. If I encounter any of them, as I do from time to time, I'll make a guarded inquiry. And if GEOGRAPHY happens to turn up at some showing here or in Berkeley, I'll find out about it for you. As I say, though, as a group they are not particularly disposed towards shadiness, although perhaps one individual might do something out of hand.

I did not mean to give the impression that Rohauer himself was shady, either. Actually he is not a bad guy at all and I don't think that he would pirate prints himself. But he does know a great many people in Hollywood, and through them he gets access to films that might have been pirated by someone else. His biggest fault is in not having much taste or discrimination when it comes to picking good films. Anything goes with him as long as its showable, and the more mysterious the source, the better the film, as far as he's concerned. Otherwise, he does business promptly, and fairly. He is not connected in any way with the Berkeley people, who are novices.

Where did you get BATTLE OF SAN PIETRO? That was one item I thought would never see an audience. I'm curious.

Actually I have found nothing substantial yet. You know, this series was inspired by your letters of last October, when you told me of all these interesting titles, and I immediately wanted to plan a series around them—using them as a core. That is why I'm so anxious to include them all, if possible. Other than that, I want to get LE REGLE DU JEU, available now on 16mm from an outfit in Chicago. It was shown in N.Y., but not here yet. I may be obliged to give this title up, however, if it turns up at a commercial house.

Whatever I find of new interest, I'll let you know right away.

Thanks so much for your prompt reply, and the check. Let me hear from you as quickly as possible—I'm in that anxious state.

Sincerely

[Frank Stauffacher]

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Anne Dubs, with Notes from Maya Deren, 1/30/51

[Anne Dubs was Maya Deren's assistant. The handwritten notes that Deren added to the letter are shown in italics.]

[. . .]

January 30, 1951

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Stauffacher:

Since she is so involved in her book at this moment, Miss Deren has asked that I answer your long letter and to thank you for it. She wants you to know that she will be glad to do anything she can to work something out.

The problem is that there must be three bookings in California in order that the tour can work, and that they must be spaced close together, since she cannot afford a long absence from New York, and also since living away from home is so expensive that any long wait over consumes the lecture fee money, which as you are already aware, is not very much.

As far as Berkeley is concerned, Hank Krivetsky was quite aware that the University of California would, if it could be arranged, be better for Miss Deren than his group. If it came to an alternative choice—that is if the University of California would not want her if he took her—then, it was better to go to the University. He committed himself and his group, so that we could be certain of at least one thing in Berkeley, but Miss Deren feels that he would relinquish his booking to the University if its booking demanded that. On the other hand, it has often happened that a first lecture actually stimulates an interest in a second one, both from the point of publicity and word of mouth. Miss Deren is a lively lecturer and makes a very personable appearance which is not always expected, *They seem to expect me to be middle-aged & wearing glasses!* but is talked about afterward. She has several times been booked for two lectures in the same institution, and the second seems to have gained audience, rather than lost it; so that perhaps it could be arranged that both of these take place and that a certain concession in fee could be estimated, under this condition to Krivetsky's group, if his date followed the University.

Anyway, the more bookings there are, the smaller the transportation share of each one. The Hollywood group has asked for April 27, and in terms of the itinerary, this would be very convenient. If you could possibly manage to schedule an evening before the 27th, that would be best. If, however, this date is the best one for you, Miss Deren feels that her first loyalty is to you, both from the point of precedence and preference, and we should try to work out some other arrangement for Hollywood. The 24th or 25th would be fine for us, if you could manage a lecture then. We could send you all sorts of material and help think up publicity angles enough to warrant an extra session of the series, apart from its regular schedule. In a certain sense, it would be easier to get publicity on the basis that it was a special presentation.

Incidentally, Miss Deren asks that you count her in on the audience at Mr. Smith's three dimensional film on the 20th. *Am very interested in this.* As far as she is concerned, she would be quite willing to share a program with him, except that she thinks a venture such as his would require an entire evening, and her own program usually lasts well into the night, because of the liveliness of the discussion. April 13th is out of the question, since that is too early.

You mention having tried Oakland, and speak of a good possibility at Stanford, but we are not quite sure whether we should contact them also, and above all, we do not know whom you would want us

to write to. Please let us know immediately. A friend of Miss Deren feels that a friend of his in the Art Department of San Francisco State College, John Gutmann, would be interested and helpful in organizing a possible booking there. We are writing him today. If you are making the contact also, perhaps it would work out.

Miss Deren feels sure that somehow it can all be arranged and is planning on it. Her primary interest in coming to the Coast is the San Francisco group, so please feel assured that you have precedence and that we shall be as cooperative as possible in working it out with you.

Thank you again for your efforts, and we await further word from you.

Sincerely yours,

Anne Dubs *[hw]*
Anne Dubs
Assistant

Hope this all works out! Maya

[Deren was writing Divine Horseman: The Living Gods of Haiti *(London: Thames and Hudson, c. 1953), available from Documentext, P.O. Box 638, New Paltz, NY 12561.]*

Letter to Harold Leonard from Frank Stauffacher, 2/8/51

Febuary 8, 1951

Dear Harold,

Please excuse my almost inexcusable delay in sending you material, or in even following up our meeting with a note. It has been due entirely to my work which has kept me terribly busy. However, whenever I have had a chance, I've been gathering up notes and items for you, and here they are. And now that I'm trying to get together new films for our forthcoming seventh series in April, I can find time to try and help you in any way you might want. I have written to Cinema 16 about Peterson's films, and he replies that I can use all of them to show you at any time arranged. Now I have hopes of coming down to Hollywood within a few weeks, but I can't be sure. I think the best thing for me to do is to have Vogel send the films to me right now, and I'll bring them down whenever I find it possible to come—after first letting you know the date, of course.

I've enclosed a number of program notes that we always compile for each program. The information in them is not as conclusive as it could be, but they do provide a general informational plug. I think one of the mistakes of our book "Art in Cinema" was that we printed such program notes without trying to augment them, or correct them, and there they remained with their errors and limitations, displaying for all to see, our naivete. Yet even so, I think it was worth publishing, and it is continually amazing to me how steadily it sells. We can now say that the little book has found its way into every country in the world, since just last week came an order for ten copies, from Moscow.

I just don't know how much information you will want on the history of our organization, and the main line of thought behind it. I will try to give you a brief account. At first, back in 1946, we actually concieved of a series of films displaying the work of artists in the film medium—just exactly a literal interpretation of the name Art in Cinema. However, this project soon fell by the wayside because it showed itself to be extremely limited, and having little value except as a novelty. Instead, and with the good help of Jay Leyda, we organized a series of films built around the history of the avant-garde. Naturally we were sceptical of public response, particularly when we found ourselves committed to five or six hundred dollars worth of film rentals, including both 35mm and 16mm. I say we. A colleague of mine named Richard Foster, a business management consultant, of all things, and myself are the we, or were—as he has long since dropped out, and I carry the organization entirely alone, except for the help of the museum in certain clerical matters, bookeeping, projection, etc.

This first series, in 1946, was a tremendous success, and enabled us to financially help certain film makers. The fact that we could offer large sums to sincere experimentation gave an impetus to the

experimental movement—if it can be said that there was a movement at that time. I think that herein lies the unique value of "Art in Cinema." It provided a truly non-commercial show window for films of this kind, and it could afford to offer certain kinds of financial help. This was apparently unprecedented, and without a doubt, brought together the strings and leads of scattered individuals interested in this medium, and created what might be called an "experimental movement." Without seeming presumptuous, it is safe to assume that Art in Cinema was responsible for what Lewis Jacobs terms a post-war movement in experimental film in this country. It would be silly to claim that there would not have been a movement if Art in Cinema had never existed, because the desire to make these small individual films was present in the character of the climate. But we did give the thing an impetus and a form—and unwittingly. Another point is that practically all of the film societies dealing in this kind of film were started after our Art in Cinema, and with our advice—particularly Cinema 16. It does rankle me sometimes when I see that organization taking credit for being the first to assemble and issue experimental films in this country. That is a direct untruth, as I have in my files a mass of correspondence from Amos Vogel before he began Cinema 16, in which he asked the source of every film we showed, and the financial setup of our organization. This information was gladly given to him as a further extension of our work—and he most certainly did well by it. However, credit where credit is due. Cinema 16 can rightly claim to be the first commercial venture—and probably the only successful commercial venture in experimental films.

As I get into this, I see that it might be just as well for me to include with the material I am sending, a paper that I prepared last year as an application for a Guggenheim Fellowship for writing a larger and better book on the experimental film. It will give you a pretty clear idea of the whole motive behind my work. Granted, there is a kind of confusion of terms, and I don't think any of us care very much for the term "experimental films," but there just doesn't seem to be any better way of designating the subject at the present time. I do believe, however, that a great deal of development in film expression can eventually come out of these meaningless—or seeming meaningless—little films. Some thirty-five films have already been produced as a direct result of our activity in general. A number of us have found our way into more commercial aspects of the film just through our education and participation in Art in Cinema. Could not some of us eventually find our way into more final production? It was from just such unfettered, experimental schools that the great French directors came. Such schooling has never existed in this country. But with the gradual breaking up of the old hackneyed methods that have existed in Hollywood from the early days, and the more turbulent animosity towards Hollywood on the part of the public, it may be that we can find our respective places as more legitimate producers. I am thinking here of just exactly what happened to Sidney Peterson in being given unlimited funds to start a small producing organization in Seattle. What may come out of this particular company is another matter, but the fact is that the entire thing proceeded in a small, modest way, free from Hollywood, and with the possibility of creating a film as good as Hollywood could do, and perhaps better.

All of this is, of course, supposition. But I want to bring it up in order to point out that there has been behind our putting on of film showings, and making of films, a more than diletante approach and aim. The title "Art in Cinema" is rather unfortunate; it suggests the most precious, the most rarified, and the most open-to-attack sort of cinematic playing around. But the title stuck because our work quickly became known by it, although I am well aware of its precious connotations, and I often shudder. You brought up the point yourself at our conversation, and I want to make haste to make it clear that we are not as arty as our title sounds.

I've checked all of the films produced directly for our showings, or under their influence or stimulation. Also I've checked program notes for them on the program note sheets. There are some others that were included after it was too late to have notes for them, and a few of the films were shown only once and then hastily withdrawn, and never seen again. Peterson's AH, NURTURE is one of these.

Broughton and Kermit Sheets have been working full-time on a production that was originally supposed to be a single film containing six separate sections, visualizations of six of his poems in his book called "Musical Chairs." But they found each sequence took over on its own, so that now they find themselves with six films; only under the circumstances, they will have to boil it all down to four films in or order to have them finished in time for our April series. I have a great deal of faith in these productions, and also in Harry Smith's new venture, a three-dimensional abstract film. I am planning to have my own film on San Francisco if I can ever break away from the hundred little duties that are part of putting on the series, earning a living at making television spots, and finishing

up a film for our museum on Jaques Lipschitz, the sculptor. Josephine Booth won a Bender award last year for making dance films. She has been down in the Mojhave Desert shooting the footage on several. Although her film DIMINISHED IRIS was not much of a success on our last series, she will probably do well, as she has great determination, together with funds and all the time in the world.

I realize this material is quite rambling and inadequate, but I think it might help you in a general way, so that you would have some specific questions when I come down with the Peterson films, and any others I can gather up. Regarding Rohauer, he has asked for some of the films for showing during April, but they will be most of the titles he has already shown. I don't think anything new will be completed by then.

I plunged into this subject so immediately at the beginning of this letter that I did not get to tell you how happy both my wife and I were to meet you, and how sorry I was to hear that you had been under the weather around the first of the year. I do hope that you have been feeling better. And I do hope that I can get down there within a few weeks.

With best wishes, and thank you again so much for your interest.

[Frank Stauffacher]

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[On Friday, April 20, 1951, Art in Cinema presented James Broughton's Four in the Afternoon *(1951),* The Adventures of Jimmy *(1950),* Loony Tom, The Happy Lover *(1951)*—Adventures *accompanied by a quartet. Broughton also recited his own poetry. Four short 3-D films by Harry Smith were shown on Friday, April 27th. Stauffacher's San Francisco film is* Notes on the Port of St. Francis *(1952).]*

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Seventh Series, Spring 1951

The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

ART IN CINEMA

FIFTH YEAR—SEVENTH SERIES

Five important film programs, in which some of the most outstanding of recent European prize-winners will be shown, as well as a number of new local achievements, several great works from the classics valuable to our study, and an unprecedented attempt in audio-visual coordination. This Seventh Series of Art in Cinema will present what may be the most valuable of any previous series during its five years as the leading exponent of experiments in film expression.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

LE MONDE DE PAUL DELVAUX (The World of Paul Delvaux) (1947) by Henri Storck, with a poem written and spoken by Paul Eluard. A prize-winner of the International Film Festival, Venice, in 1948. (Courtesy Cinema 16)
PACIFIC 231 by Jean Mitry, with the music by Arthur Honegger. Another prize-winner at last year's Venice Festival (Courtesy M. Jean de Lagarde)
LE REGLE DU JEU (The Rules of The Game) (1941) By Jean Renoir. His most personal, most provocative masterpiece. (Trans-World Films)

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

AUBERVILLIERS (1948) by Eli Lotar, with a poem by Jacques Prevert. Prix International de Poesie, International Film Festival, Belgium, 1949. (Courtesy Cinema 16)
SHIPYARD (1937) by Raul Rotha. Through the courtesy of Cinema 16, this famous short documentary will be shown for the first time in the West.
THE TEAR, PARABEL, LEGATO, PUNKIT PRELUDIUM. Four recent Danish abstract short films by Soren Melson and Henning Bandtsen. (Courtesy Cinema 16)

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MOTHER (1926) by Vsevolod Pudovkin. From the novel of the same name by Maxim Gorky. The incredible intensity and beauty of this film places it among the few masterpieces of the Cinema. (Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Library)

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

ELISABETH and LACFADIO (1947). Two recent experiments from France **by Jean Beranger.** (Courtesy Cinema 16)
FLUGTEN *(Escape)* (1947) by Albert Mertz and Jorgen Roos. Highly unusual Danish experiment. (Courtesy Cinema 16)
FETES GALANTES (1948) by Jean Aurel and Gaston Diehl; music by Jean Francaix. The grace and delicacy of Watteau in a very recent French achievement. (Courtesy M. Jean de Lagarde)
BOXING TONIGHT (1949) by Eugene Dana. (Courtesy Mr. Dana)
THE RAVEN (1950) by Lewis Jacobs. Based upon the Poe poem, and the engravings of this subject by Gustave Dore. (Courtesy Mr. Lewis Jacobs)

FRIDAY, APRIL 20

Premiere of three new films by James Broughton:
1. **FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON.** A group of poems choreographed for film, featuring **Ann Halprin** and **Welland Lathrop,** and with a score by **William O. Smith.**
   (a) Game Little Gladys; (b) The Gardener's Son; (c) Princess Printemps; (d) The Aging Balletomane
2. **ADVENTURES OF JIMMY.** An amorous fable in documentary style. This premiere presentation will be accompanied by **Weldon Kees** at the piano, **Jack Lowe** on the drums, **Jon Schueler** on the bass, and **Adran Wilson,** clarinet.
3. **LOONY TOM, THE HAPPY LOVER.** An exuberant comedy of the free spirit; featuring Kermit Sheets and The Interplayers.

NOTE: During the presentation of the above three films Mr. Broughton will read certain of his poems to accompany several of the subjects.
ROOM STUDIES No 1 - 3. Three short painted-on-film compositions by Denmark's foremost experimental film maker. (Courtesy Cinema 16)
THE SPY (also known as THE BRIDGE) by Charles Vidor. An early experiment by this well-known Hollywood director. (Courtesy Raymond Rohauer)

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

TWO EVENTS OF TREMENDOUS INTEREST:
THREE-DIMENSIONAL FILMS by Harry Smith. The premiere public showing of the first three-dimensional non-objective films to be made. There will be four short subjects. They will be projected both with synchronized sound track of Balinese, Hopi and Yorouba music, and also accompanied by modern instrumentalists and a vocalist improvising directly from the visual stimuli. (By permission of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundaton)
MAYA DEREN, this country's most eminent individual film maker, will be present to show her films and to deliver a lively lecture on them. Mis Deren needs no introduction to the followers of Art in Cinema. Her films were the first to be shown here, and it is due to her energy and talent that the experimental cinema in this country has been established.

NOTE: The films have been drawn from a wide variety of sources, from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, from various other distributors, and from the individual artists themselves. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control—shipping failures, poor quality of prints, etc. The series is organized on the same basis as previous series: Non-profit, non-commercial, with admission by series subscription only.

Art in Cinema is collaborating with the University Extension, University of California, in presenting an additional series of films at Wheeler Auditorium, April 3, April 17, May 8, and May 22, to consist of some of most outstanding films already shown at the San Francisco Showings in past series. For details, see the University Extension bulletin.

Illustration 27. Program announcement for the seventh series, spring 1951. An order blank followed the text.

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TWO EVENTS OF TREMENDOUS INTEREST:
THREE-DIMENSIONAL FILMS by Harry Smith. The premiere public showing of the first three-dimensional non-objective films to be made. There will be four short subjects. They will be projected both with synchronized sound track of Balinese, Hopi, and Yorouba music, and also accompanied by modern instrumentalists and a vocalist improvising directly from the visual stimuli. (By permission of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation)
MAYA DEREN, this country's most eminent individual film maker, will be present to show her films and to deliver a lively lecture on them. Miss Deren needs no introduction to the followers of Art in Cinema. Her films were the first to be shown here and it is due to her energy and talent that the experimental cinema in this country has been established.

NOTE The films have been drawn from a wide variety of sources, from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, from various other distributors, and from the individual artists themselves. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control—shipping failures, poor quality of prints, etc. The series is organized on the same basis as previous series: Non-profit, non-commercial, with admission by series subscription only.

Art in Cinema is collaborating with the University Extension, University of California, in presenting an additional series of films at Wheeler Auditorium, April 3, April 17, May 8, and May 22, to consist of some of [the] most outstanding films already shown at the San Francisco Showings in past series. For details, see the University Extension bulletin.

[An order blank followed.]

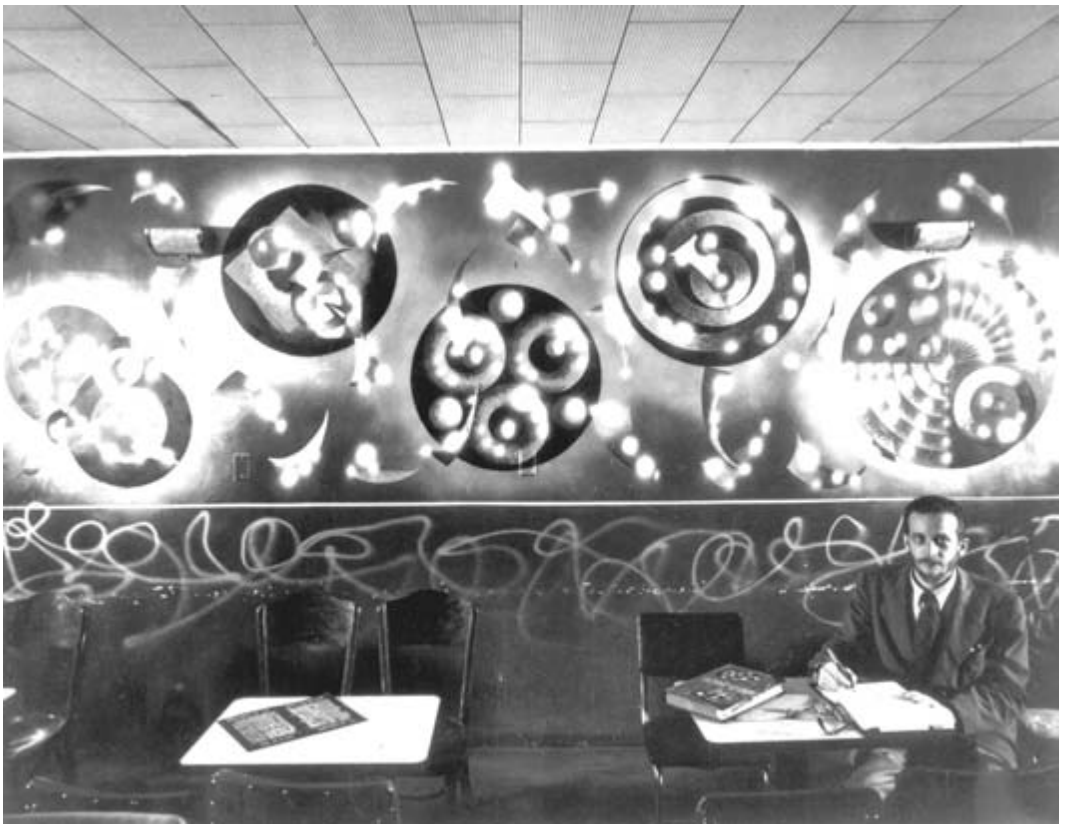

Illustration 28. Harry Smith with "Jimbo's Bop City" (1950), a mural of his own design. Photograph by Hy Hirsh. Courtesy Harry Smith Archives.

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Maya Deren, 3/24/51

[. . .]

March 24, 1951

Dear Frank,

The activities which you describe seem extremely lively, and what with bop musicians, "live ones at that" etc., etc., I am afraid that I will seem a bit anticlimactic. Maybe I can dream up a leopard or two to work into my act. Or maybe the special thing that I should work on would be the fourth dimensional movie which would involve the appropriate perfume being squirted at the appropriate moment. In any case, I shall do my best to live up to the glamorous standards which are being set.

The advance will be dearly appreciated. I do have to buy my round trip ticket in advance. Otherwise, I lose a lot of money, and this means an outlay which is not too easy for me to make at this point.

I am writing Krivetsky today. As for Rohauer, I have been having difficulties with him all along. He seems to approach this as if it were a commercial enterprise and it is also difficult to know exactly how much of what he says is precisely so; for example, last summer he met my lawyer in Los Angeles and spoke to my lawyer in terms of engagements involving six lectures in a row and all sorts of Cecil B. De Mille plans, but when it came down to actually working out the lecture it suddenly appears that he cannot even afford to guarantee more than a $100.00.

The University of Washington did work out and I am lecturing there on the 16th. I am lecturing in Eugene, Oregon, on the 19th and would probably be coming down to San Francisco immediately following that lecture, which means I should arrive there about the 20th or 21st. I am wondering if you would be so kind as to look into the matter of hotel accommodations for me beginning as of that date. The hotel should be centrally located so that I can get around a bit, but the accommodation itself can be very modest, since I will have to be paying for it while I wait for the lecture dates. I think that if you could manage something around $3.00, it would be all right. In some places they have taken the main suite for me and naturally my fees won't carry anything like such glamorous accommodations. If anybody has a mansion that they are not using at the moment, or even a minor mansion, that would be fine too. One of my problems is that I will be writing on a book while I am in San Francisco, and the complete quiet and privacy of a hotel is very good for that, whereas staying with people usually involves a certain social exchange.

But I leave all this to your discretion. I will let you know when exactly I am due into San Francisco. Thanks for everything.

My best to you,

Maya *[hw]*

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from James Broughton, 4/18/51

Tuesday, Apr 18

Dear Frank,

I received your letter yesterday & promptly paid the Museum of M A a visit. O those girls! You may hear from them almost as soon as from me. Akermark was charming, truly; she confirmed all your other bookings to replace Emmer Gras; and told me about another Italian film (on 35) called Barboni, that is like Bambini in Citta, though this one is about bums. She said she would write you about it herself, so doubtless I needn't say more—except that it is a special item of theirs, they have only the original print, so it isn't generally circulated. I prodded her to find out about other films; I prodded & prodded. But nothing else seemed forthcoming at the moment. By the fall there should be released the film on Picasso's Guernica, the new Calder film with Cage music, & similar art films; as well as some more Emmer Gras numbers, with music on them that won't get it into trouble, which was the case with those they have withdrawn.

Miss de Rosa (so chic: wearing only one enormous earring like a small mobile) looked & looked, but couldn't find any stills from DESTINY. Talked about having photostats from old magazines made, but it was dim to me how real that was. TEN DAYS stills are supposedly en route to you now. I have been trying to get in touch with Rudy Carlson, but he has moved his office, or something; the number is changed, & I left messages but so far he hasn't called me back.

Rosalind [Kossoff] is more magnificent than ever. She is dying to see SAUSALITO. You must trust her completely, about everything. I don't know whether you have sent your reel of films already, to Vogel, but considering that today is the 18th, & you say you have a booking for the 20th, it seems unlikely. I'd be happy to chaperone them, but unless they are here this week, I shan't be able to do much about it. However, what I'm driving at is that you should, when you can spare the reel away for a time, send your films to Rosalind; she says she will see that Vogel gets them, & returns them. If they can't be here for me to promote, I'd say let Rosalind be your chaperone.

She may have some films that you will want eventually. She is doing another mailing on what she has available within the week, so you will have that material soon. She mentioned a film on Franklin Watkins, but I know nothing about it. Arthur Knight is doing a piece for The Saturday Review & will mention MOTHER'S DAY. And there will be a blurb in Film News, with a still. I love that girl.

I've not seen Vogel, nor called him; haven't been sure I would (though I'd like to make an arrangement for him to send me my half of intake on Potted Psalm, instead of its coming thru Pete [Sidney Peterson]). But my relations to Vogel have been considerably strained since last year; & practically no

one has a very good word for him. Hugo balked at distributing his film through him, so I arranged for Rosalind to screen it tomorrow. It's quite beautiful, though it may not be quite peppy enough for A.F.

Akermark has the Van Gogh film, but of course it was showing at the St Francis when I left, with the 3rd Man. I haven't much time to hobnob with all the filmites while here; I've so many other people to see. And I shall have to be leaving sometime early next week—not before Tuesday, or so (I'll stretch it as long as I can)—but still it's a very rushed time.

Frank, will you save two seats down front for Kermit & me, for the series? I didn't get my order in before I left.

Mr Rudy Carlson just called me: says that he does have a very few stills of the Sucksdorff films, but they are in a file that is locked up in storage at the moment, because he is in the process of moving his office. (Which explains why I had difficulty reaching him.) But he was extremely pleasant & willing to be cooperative: altho, of course, saying that they do not make a practice of providing stills with films, etc to which I gave the big buildup about how important Art in Cinema is, etc. So he promised to do all he could: as soon as he could lay his hands on them: and my final impression was that you should have something from him before too very long.

Well, bye bye for now, dear Frank. I hope I've done right by you. I always enjoy tooting the trumpet for you & Art in Cinema. This is still an incorrigible documentary town! Write me, if there's anything more I can do for you. Ever thine,

Jimmy *[hw]*

Reprinted by permission of Joel Singer.

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Letter to Vincent Price from Frank Stauffacher, 5/22/51

May 22, 1951

Vincent L. Price
1815 Benedict Canyon
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Dear Mr. Price,

It makes me extremely shamefaced when I suddenly realize how long it has been since I received your very kind letter in answer to my first one to you regarding my San Francisco film. Wolfgang Paalen was at my house last Monday night and reminded me of my almost inexcusable tardiness. But just about the time your letter came, I was plunged into conducting a film series here and one at University of California, and it was also the beginning of our television series on the activities of the museum, all of which left me with a scramble for time. The San Francisco film had to be put aside temporarily. However, it was disgraceful of me not to at least acknowledge your answer. I do hope you will accept my excuse.

I was extremely flattered by your interest in the film idea, and hope, if you [are] still disposed towards it, that a way can be found for you to do the Stevenson narration. Due to all of the other activities I mentioned, it hasn't been possible for me to work on it since my first letter. But all of that is over now, and I mean to devote most of the next few months to it. I had hoped that I could send it to one of the documentary film festivals abroad this year, but it looks as if it won't be able to get on the lists now until next year.

The State Department has awarded a contract to a local commercial film firm to do a definitive documentary on San Francisco in order to "sell" the American way of life abroad. I would like to make my film concerned with the true flavor of the city, and not a selling job. That is why I was so bent on <u>not</u> using the commercial voices available, and why I was so happy to know that it might be possible for your voice to do the narration.

Thank you again most sincerely for your interest, and do please excuse my tardiness in answering. Now I really plan to come down to L.A. in about three weeks time. As you suggested in your letter, I'll drop you a card beforehand.

Most sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

[Vincent Price narrates Stauffacher's Notes on the Port of St. Francis *(1952), using a description of the city written by Robert Louis Stevenson.]*

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Conversation with Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, 7/18/99

Scott MacDonald: When did you and Frank get together?

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon: We were married in '48.

MacDonald: When did you meet?

Solomon: In '47. I was a kid. 13 years younger than Frank. A cute little blonde who followed him around.

MacDonald: Where did you meet him?

Solomon: At Art in Cinema. My ballet school used to be across the street, and because I was also studying painting at the California School of Fine Arts, I'd go in the evening to the Museum. One night, as I walked into the museum, Dick Foster said, "Hi, babe, we're doing these Art in Cinema programs on Friday nights. I'll leave you a ticket. What's your name?"

Anyway, I went to Art in Cinema, took one look at Frank—he was handsome as hell—and fell for him. Dick's girlfriend *told* Frank and he phoned me. We went out the next week. He liked his cute little ballet dancer, and I thought *he* was wonderful. He took me to all of these parties. He knew everybody. Then I went to New York for about a year and danced. When I came back, I saw him more and more until we got married.

MacDonald: What was your involvement in Art in Cinema?

Solomon: May I tell the truth? I couldn't stand all those experimental films. I kept thinking, "Come on, let's go to a *real* movie." But I was a good little Fifties girl and kept my mouth shut. I did talk to Jimmy Broughton. I told him, "I *hate* all that stuff you like."

Pauline Kael didn't like it much either. We were good friends. She was much smarter than I was. I mean at that time I'd been a dancer, but I'd never been to college and I was afraid to open my mouth. Pauline had a degree in philosophy from Berkeley, and she opened her mouth beautifully.

MacDonald: What do you remember about particular independent filmmakers who were involved with Art in Cinema?

Solomon: James Broughton was a sweetheart.

MacDonald: Do you remember Ian Hugo?

Solomon: Oh yes! Because he was married to Anais Nin. At one point, when we were living in New York and had no money and I was working at A.F. Films trying to make a buck and Frank was looking for work, Ian, who was a friend of Broughton's, and Anais had us to cocktails. Ian wanted Frank to see *The Bells of Atlantis*. He wanted Frank to show it at Art in Cinema. So they invited us to cocktails in their fancy apartment. Anais was this kohl-eyed, red-lipped, white-faced bitch. She did nothing particular *to* me except ignore me. She *was* nice to Frank.

MacDonald: What about Harry Smith?

Solomon: One of the best things Frank ever did was having a jazz band on stage and Harry Smith's experimental films on screen. The musicians improvised to the film.

Frank knew an amazing amount about music, and he made friends with musicians.

MacDonald: One of the important genres of experimental film in those days was visual music.

Solomon: Have you talked to Jordan Belson?

MacDonald: Yes. I interviewed him by phone—he wouldn't see me.

Solomon: He lives right near here. I pass his place all the time and always look to see if he's coming in or out. I remember being in his flat with Frank, but I couldn't have been more than 17. Jordan must be old now. I mean *he's* older than *I* am!

MacDonald: I've met his wife.

Solomon: He has a wife? Well then he sees *somebody*! And things aren't so bad.

He probably can't stand all the experimental film people. I understand *completely*. My going to Switzerland after Frank died was partly a reaction to the arty schmaltz of all that experimental stuff and all those people. I had to get as far from it as I could. I think Jordan may have a similar take on that.

MacDonald: Did Frank put his own financial resources into Art in Cinema?

Solomon: No. But he put his resources into his own films. He put so much money into *Notes on the Port of St. Francis* that we borrowed to eat and sold his car, and I was going from Sausalito to school in Berkeley on the bus!

Of course, if he'd lived, he would've become a real filmmaker and he would have made some money.

MacDonald: So when did you get more involved with Art in Cinema?

Solomon: I wasn't really involved until we came back from New York and Frank was sick and the museum hired me to help him.

MacDonald: That was in 1953?

Solomon: Yeah.

MacDonald: When I was looking at the Art in Cinema papers at the Pacific Film Archive, I was struck by the huge amount of correspondence it took to keep Art in Cinema going.

Solomon: It was *totally* a labor of love. And it *was* a labor.

MacDonald: Tell me a little more about the Hollywood directors Series. You were very involved with that.

Solomon: Yes, Frank had had his first brain operation by then and looked like hell. When Frank had that first surgery, the San Franciscans were nowhere to be found. They were great for parties, but when everything got ugly and there was a real illness, they disappeared.

But the Hollywood directors were wonderful to work with. They were thoughtful and concerned about Frank.

MacDonald: For a young person, you seem to have had a lot of skill in dealing with the Hollywood directors.

Solomon: I don't remember a lot from that period. Frank was so sick, and *I* was having headaches and taking so much codeine. I was miserable and drinking too much. But we ran the series. And *every one* of those Hollywood people who came was good with Frank. Fred Zinnemann was especially charming. They all saw this sick beautiful guy with his little baby wife and couldn't have been kinder. So I remember each one.

One reason Frank had all these connections in Hollywood was Tony Duquette, the decorator. He was Frank's best friend; their mothers had been best friends, and when Frank studied at Art Center School in L.A., he lived with Tony's family. *Tony's* best friend in Hollywood was Vincent Minnelli. We went to parties down there. That's where we met Vincent Price and *that* bunch. And that's why Frank could have Vincent Price do the narration on *Notes on the Port of St. Francis.* That was through Tony.

MacDonald: In the letters that went back and forth during the Hollywood directors series, it's obvious how interested the directors were in being taken seriously. Now we take it for granted that if you're a Hollywood director, you're part of intellectual history. But it's clear in the letters that there was a time when Hollywood directors were not taken very seriously.

Solomon: I remember Zinnemann saying, "God forbid my producers ever hear I'm doing something that has anything to do with the word 'art.' They'll fire me! They'll kill me!" And Zinnemann was a smart, educated Austrian! He was afraid of getting into trouble.

Gene Kelly loved being in the museum *as a director* instead of as a hoofer. He was honest about it.

MacDonald: Between the first series and the second series you write a lot of letters that begin, "Our first series has not come to an end and we're looking for.…" And one of the things that you say to convince the next group to come to San Francisco is that everyone who has already come up has written afterward to say what a wonderful time they had and how important the work you're doing *is*.

Solomon: Actually, that sounds like something Frank dictated to me to write down and type. By that time I was working at the museum. When I wasn't typing *our* letters, I was typing the membership letters to join the museum, and the membership cards. Dr. Morley was a good friend. If Frank had to go to the hospital, and I didn't get to work, she never questioned me. She paid my salary. They subsidized Frank and me—and our daughter, Chloe.

MacDonald: What do you remember about the American Directors Series, about the events themselves?

Solomon: George Stevens showed pieces of *A Place in the Sun*. He had just made it. I remember Frank getting up and talking and being charming. He was so good at covering how sick he really was. People just thought he was this charming guy with a stutter.

I should remember more, but I just don't. Frank went back for a second brain operation. He wanted to try anything to get better, but that second operation was a disaster and afterward, Frank really was a mess. He needed to hang on to me. He could hardly walk, and he could hardly talk. We must have stopped doing the Art in Cinemas by then.

MacDonald: There's no indication in the letters that he's sick. There's no hint in the letters there's even a problem. It's amazing.

Solomon: When Frank died—and we knew all along he was dying—I fled to Switzerland and became a designer and *I* became very good at covering up the pain. I didn't have time to mourn. I had a child who had cerebral palsy. I had to go to work and make money. But it was all a big cover up, emotionally.

MacDonald: That was partly the era. You weren't allowed to vent emotions. If I got angry, my father would get angry at my *being* angry.

Solomon: That's the Fifties.

Another reason I went to Switzerland is that I couldn't bear being the "poor little widow." In those days you weren't a single parent, you were a "poor little widow." I covered it all up *really* well, *so* well that a lot of people thought I didn't care that Frank died.

Margareta Akermark gave a cocktail party when I was on my way back to Basel and staying at a friend's apartment on Madison Avenue. My friend's husband was very handsome and very sweet. He'd been through this kind of loss and he knew how wretched I was. For that cocktail party I got dressed up, he got dressed up, and we went, looking like lovers without a care in the world. It was all a big scam so that I wouldn't look pathetic. None of those people ever talked to me again.

MacDonald: In the years following Frank's death, Art in Cinema was used as a title for other series in the Bay Area. Did you have anything to do with that?

Solomon: No. I was in Europe until 1962, and when I came back, I opened an office as a designer. One of Frank's friends, Lawrence Halprin, the landscape architect, gave me an office in his building and through him I got a lot of big jobs. Frank's family evaporated. I never saw the Art in Cinema people again.

[After Frank Stauffacher's death, Barbara Stauffacher studied graphic design and worked as a graphic designer. She is author, as Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, of Green Architecture and the Agrarian Garden *(New York: Rizzoli, 1988) and* Good Mourning California *(New York: Rizzoli, 1992).]*

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Illustration 29. Three stills from Frank Stauffacher's *Notes on the Port of St. Francis* (1952). Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive.

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Eighth Series, Fall 1951

[I have not been able to find a program announcement for this series; I am basing the following listing on the "Program Notes" for Series Eight, made available at some point before the series began. The Program Notes are apparently incomplete: "Notes for several films scheduled on the series, but not annotated here, have not yet been compiled at this printing."]

NEW INTERPRETATIONS: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

IMAGES POUR DEBUSSY by Jean Mitry, 1951
COLOR CRY by Len Lye, 1952
NOTES ON THE PORT OF ST. FRANCIS by Frank Stauffacher, 1951
BARBONI by Dino Risi, 1946

OLD INTERPRETATIONS STILL NEW

NIGHT ON BARE MOUNTAIN by Alexander Alexeieff and Claire Parker, 1934
MID-VINTER BLOT (Mid-Winter Sacrifice) by Gosta Werner, 1946

JOYS AND MISERIES OF THE SPONSORED FILM: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14

A comprehensive coverage of the best achievements in sponsored films would fill many weeks of showings, and involve much hair-splitting as to the final definition of a "sponsored" film. Foremost among them would be Robert Flaherty's LOUISIANA STORY, sponsored by the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. Our selection, however, is concerned with short essays, roughly divided into two groups, public relations films and advertising films.

TWO BAGATELLES by Norman McLaren, 1952
DAVID by Paul Dickson, 1951

MASTERS OF MOOD: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21

LEAVES FROM THE BOOK OF SATAN by Carl Dreyer, 1921
THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF DAVID GRAY (Vampyr) by Carl Dreyer, 1932
COUER D'LAMOUR EPRIS by Jean Aurel, 1951
COLOR DANCES #1 by James Davis

SOCIAL DISCOVERIES: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28

BED AND SOFA by Alexander Room, 1926
LES DESASTRES DE LA GUERRE by Pierre Kast, 1951
TWO YOUNG LADIES:
ZANSABELLE A PARIS by Saniko Bo and Starevitch, 1945
MADELINE by the United Productions of America, 1952

[Stauffacher indicates at the end of these notes that "ART IN CINEMA'S collected program notes for the past six years, revised and augmented, will soon be available in book form." To my knowledge this book never materialized.]

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Program Notes for the 11/14/52 Presentation, by Frank Stauffacher

ART IN CINEMA **PROGRAM NOTES**

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART **SERIES EIGHT: 1952**

JOYS AND MISERIES OF THE SPONSORED FILM

A PHANTASY	Norman McLaren (Nat. F.B. Canada)
MAN ALIVE	UPA (American Cancer Soc.)
STORY OF TIME	Signal Films (Rolex)
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE	UPA (CBS)
TWO BAGATELLES	Norman McLaren (Nat. F.B. Canada)
LAND OF ENCHANTMENT	Henwar Rodakiewicz (U.S. Govt.)

(Note: Due to the unique opportunity of showing Rodakiewicz' film, LAND OF ENCHANTMENT tonight,—a restricted film, made exclusively for foreign circulation,—we have withdrawn Paul Dickson's DAVID. We believe this substitution to be of much greater interest.

At this writing also, the film, WORDS FOR BATTLE, has not yet arrived. If it fails to turn up in time for tonight's showing, it will be included in next week's program, as will Elton's TRANSFER OF POWER.)

This program has been assembled with the idea of presenting a group of the best sponsored films available, selected in the light of that genre's possibilities and weaknesses as films. The selection is not a strict one, and it would be fair to question the inclusion of the two McLaren films, since, although they are certainly sponsored, they do not advertise anything. The McLaren films have been included to spark up the program. Is this an admission that even the best of "selling" films are dull entertainment, in spite of the fact that they have been lavishly subsidized in their production? This will be a study of this question. Let us look at them. The most obvious and ineradicable fault is their garrulousness. They seem to be based upon the assumption that the human eye requires aural aid to keep it focused. That this is wrong is shown by the wordless but powerful film, STORY OF TIME.

However, it is not Art In Cinema's position to criticize these excellent publicity films. We mention this only by way of starting a personal consideration of what appear to be the necessary evils of advertising films,—if evils they are,—in contrast to the enormous talent that goes into their making.

A PHANTASY by Norman McLaren for the National Film Board of Canada. 1952. A little venture into McLaren's particular kind of surrealism. (N.F.C.)

MAN ALIVE by United Productions of America for the American Cancer Society. 1952. (Courtesy American Cancer Society)

STORY OF TIME by Signal Films, for Rolex Watches. 1951. One of the slickest jobs of frame-by-frame animation to be found. This film has been used as a theatrical short in the East. (Cornell Films)

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE by UPA for Columbia Broadcasting System. 1952. A very daring application of abstraction for communication of ideas. But when the message gets heavy the daring of the first part becomes overcrowded.

TWO BAGATELLES by Norman McLaren for the National Film Board of Canada. 1952. These are two very short trails that preceded his last film, Neighbors, and are executed in a new technique that McLaren calls "human animation." Basically simple, it recalls the early camera tricks with human figures by such early pioneers as Zecca. (Courtesy Canadian National Film Board)

LAND OF ENCHANTMENT by Henwar Rodakiewicz for the U. S. Department of Information. 1951. This is both a study of the land of the Southwest United States, and of the American artist, Georgia O'Keefe. It is Mr. Rodakiewicz' personal print, and edited the way he wished it. The final print used, however, has been re-edited by the Government. (Courtesy Mr. Rodakiewicz)

FRANK STAUFFACHER

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Program Notes for the 2/23/52 Presentation, by Frank Stauffacher

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

presents

AN EVENING WITH OSKAR FISCHINGER

February 23, 1953

PROGRAM

Study No. 6, 7, 8, 11	1922–30
Circles	1932
Composition in Blue	1933
Allegretto	1936
An American March	1940
Motion Painting Number One	1946–47

Intermission

Demonstration of the Lumigraph, Mr. Fischinger's new invention for playing color symphonies.

Oskar Fischinger was born in Germany in 1900 and began his work in the abstract graphic motion picture field at the age of 19. After wide acclaim for his pioneering efforts in the synchronization of the abstract film to music, Mr. Fischinger was invited to Hollywood in 1936 by a major motion picture studio. In 1937, he was engaged by Walt Disney to plan the Bach Toccata and Fugue section of "Fantasia." His actual work was ultimately eliminated from the final version because it was considered to be "too abstract." Nonetheless, Fischinger had a decided influence on "Fantasia." Since that time, Mr. Fischinger has continued to work with the problems of sound and abstract motion and at present is preparing a three-dimensional abstract film.

STUDY NO. 6 (German, 1929–30) Black and white abstraction to jazz.

STUDY NO. 7 (German 1930–31) Black and white abstraction to Brahms' "Second Hungarian Rhapsody."

STUDY NO. 8 (German, c1931) Black and white abstraction to Dukas' "The Sorcerer's Apprentice."

STUDY NO. 11 (German, c1932) Black and white abstraction to Mozart's "Divertissement."

CIRCLES (German, 1933) A color soundfilm abstraction based, as the title indicates, on circles moving to the Venusburg music from Wagner's "Tannhauser."

ALLEGRETTO (American, 1936) Color abstraction to jazz.

AN AMERICAN MARCH (American, 1939) A color soundfilm based on Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever."

MOTION PAINTING NUMBER ONE (American 1946–47) An intricate, evergrowing sequence of colored forms developing to the music of Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto No. 3." "For the first time," as Mr. Fischinger says, "visual music is born, creating that deep emotional, almost pleasurable feeling … that we get from good music." This film was awarded the Grand Prix at the International Art and Film Festival at Brussels in 1949.

LUMIGRAPH DEMONSTRATION. Mr. Fischinger will stand behind this instrument and play color symphonies to a musical accompaniment. Images are created on the screen by impulses from electric light bulbs, transmitted through filters of various colors.

1. Lumigraph accompaniment to a piece of synthetic sound. The Lumigraph will be played while a piece of hand drawn film sound track is run through the projector. The only image to be seen will be created by the Lumigraph.

2. Lumigraph accompaniment to a series of phonograph records. Mr. Fischinger will play his color instrument to different pieces of music on a phonograph.

NOTE: On Wednesday, January 28, at 8:00 p.m., Denver Sutton will speak on "The Controversy Over the Abstract Film." Mr. Sutton's talk will be a brief history of the abstract film, and will include showing of "Symphonie Diagonal" by Eggling, "Ballet Mechanique" by Leger, "Escape" by Mary Ellen Butte, and several films by Mr. Fischinger. (Free admission.)

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Ian Hugo, 7/8/53

35 West 9th Street
New York 11, N.Y.
Algonquin 4-9110

July 8, 1953

Dear Frank,

It is possible that I may see you in San Francisco at the end of this month, and I am looking forward very much to that, and delighted that your health is improving.

I am however writing you at this time to ask your advice about the best way of introducing my new film "Bells of Atlantis" on the West Coast, and I am sending you some of the comments that have appeared.

As a matter of fact I have just today received a telephone call from Brant Sloan in Palo Alto asking if he could show this film at some new place that he has in that city. I dont know anything about it, and he is sending me some information about the kind of programs he is arranging, but I suppose you know all about it. He seems to be very happy about his new set-up.

Now I am quite willing to have Brant Sloan show the film, but I must give first consideration to what is the best thing for what will be a West Coast premiere, even though it is only a ten minute film. Here, I have been holding off all showings in favor of a premiere at the Museum of Modern Art, and I have now been assured of this for October 30th in a benefit program for the film library. After that it will go on at Cinema 16 on December 6th and following spaced dates.

Previously, the film has only (in the USA *[hw]*) been shown at the Cleveland Film Festival, and it is so different in color and depth effects from the version I showed at the Venice Film Festival last year, and all over Europe, that I could almost call it a new film.

I shall be most grateful for you advice and look forward to hearing from you.

With kindest personal regards

Sincerely yours,

Ian Hugo *[hw]*
Ian Hugo

Comments on film "Bells of Atlantis"

I have seen many films which are expressed in words, images and sounds which now constitute a familiar language—and today I might even say in a language of the past.

What impresses me about Ian Hugo's "Bells of Atlantis" is that its theme, highly poetic in itself, is expressed by means of new words, images and sounds which poets, painters and musicians will at one recognize and hail as of today and tomorrow.

Julio del Diego (painter)
New York, July 22, 1953.

Ian Hugo's intensities of color, ascending to a climax without delay or regression, seem to me remarkable camera work—complemented by the clarity and desisiveness of Louis and Beebe Barron's electronic music.

Because authoritative, never forced, the voice of Anais Nin lends the implied theme depth—the idea of the lost continent in ourselves—for which "Bells of Atlantis" is the perfect title.

Marianne Moore
New York, July 18, 1953.

"This is one of the most poetic experiences I have had in the cinema"

William Inge
Author of "Come Back Little Sheba" etc

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Raymond Rohauer from Frank Stauffacher, 8/31/53

August 31, 1953

Mr. Raymond Rohauer
Coronet Theatre
Los Angeles, California

Dear Raymond:

Thanks for the fast response. These things will have to be settled, and settled quickly because I have precious little time left.

On VENOM I understood that Art In Cinema's presentation was to be a prestige premiere, far more of a prestige send-off than any Art House could give it. To this end I have interested the press critics, and they await its arrival: and I have engaged a speaker, a world-renown authority on Zen from the University, Alan Watts, who will surely send it off with a brilliant and expressive kick. I can assure you that this will be its most memorable presentation—barring its premiere in Paris, where the audience suffered pails of water thrown on them by paid stooges and such. (Did you read the current Quarterly on TV and Film, an article by Guy Cote?)

Art In Cinema, as I will show you sincerely, in hard figures, is not a money-maker, and never was, nor does it intend to be, nor do I get but the smallest of pittance for my exhausting work when these series are planned and presented.

I will have to make this whole series of five presentations as outstanding as possible all the way through. Not only one, but all of them. And I cannot expect to charge more than a dollar admission per night, .75 to Museum Members (it was lower before). The hall has 500 seats. Figure it out. Average take: $350.00. Against this balance the expenses: one fifth of the printing bill (announcements), projectionists (and if 35mm, projectors): program notes, speaker (who gets a niggardly offering), and the percentage the Museum takes into its Art In Cinema purchase fund for janitor, equipment maintenance, police, and etc. You can see it is impossible to pay excessive rental with these figures.

True, I could, and often do, draw upon the other four nights of the series to cover a costly event, but these other four nights are also costly this time.

Series tickets for five nights will be $5.00 to the public, $3.75 or $3.50 for Museum Members. (I did not dictate these prices, the Board of Trustees did.) Art In Cinema can expect to gross about $1750.00. But here are some of the other nights:

An eleven piece colored bop band to accompany the abstract films by Pat Marks (a new figure). This has been done before at A In C, with Harry Smith's films, and is a smashing success. Musicians alone will get $10.00 each for their time.

A special screen, and rental of two geared or solomoid-driven projectors, plus 500 poloroid, 3-D glasses, for Hy Hirsh's abstract new 3-D film.

Trip costs and per diem, for Fred Zinnemann on October 2 (opening night) to give a talk, with clips from HIGH NOON and THE SEARCH. (We pay lab costs on duping these sections.)

To say nothing of the other film rentals, frieght and costs generally mentioned as "operating" costs.

My idea is to make a series of outstanding brilliance, certainly an asset to each film on it.

I do understand your financial involvements on VENOM, but with this letter I hope that you understand Art In Cinema's also. I would gladly pay you $500.00 for that one night, but it just isn't in the kitty.

Withdrawal of VENOM, as well as OLYPIAD throws everything into chaos, and besides, I gave up two pictures I would have used—THE CIRCUS and BLUE LIGHT, in their favor. If you withdraw these two films in favor of higher single rentals, what shall I do? I'll have to cancel the whole series.

The only thing I can do to raise the fee a little, is to cancel your 3 abstracts, throw in a $20.00 more, and give you $150.00 for VENOM. But can nowhere come near making much of a dent in your costs invested in the film naturally. You know as well as I do that those costs can only be repaid by steady commercial houses.

I know you might be thinking of our famous reputation of giving unheard of fees for films, viz. Fishinger, Whitneys, La Sang du Poete, Harry Smith, but this was done when our overall expenses were cheaper, and they never one went above the $100.00 figure, except for Harry Smith (and that series ended in the red.)

Raymond, you know me as an honest guy. Read this letter over again, and then answer as soon as possible. If its no go, I have to know very immediately, becuase all the factors of the series will depend on it.

Sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

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[Judging from the unusual number of typos and the fact that in this letter Art in Cinema is written "Art In Cinema," my guess is that by this time, Barbara Stauffacher was typing Stauffacher's letters, perhaps due to his medical condition.

"VENOM" in the second paragraph refers to Jean Isadore Isou's Treatise on Drivel and Eternity *(1951), also known as* Venom and Eternity. *The Guy Coté article mentioned in the same paragraph is "Cinema sans Sense,"* Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television, *Vol. 7, No. 4 (Summer 1953), pp. 335–340, a review of Lettrist activity in France.]*

Letter to Ian Hugo from Barbara Stauffacher, 9/15/53

September 15, 1953

Mr. Ian Hugo
35 West 9th Street
New York 11, N.Y.

Dear Ian:

Welcome home from the West Indies. Kermit wrote us and spoke of your trip. I'm writing for Frank as he is in the frantic last stages of preparing Art In Cinema. Frank has chosen the first night, October 2, for presenting BELLS OF ATLANTIS. He didn't get a chance to see it down in Los Angeles.

Frank says you asked for a celebrity or so to see the film and comment on it. On October 2 we're having George Stevens to speak with his films, and I'm sure his comment would be valuable.

Frank hopes the date of October 2 can be filled without too much trouble because this promises to be a gala night on Art In Cinema.

And, if you have any stills rush them out here Air Mail, as Frank wants to put some publicity on the Museum walls.

Many thanks and our best to Anais.

Please excuse my hurried letter,

Bobbie *[hw]*
Barbara Stauffacher

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Letter to Barbara Stauffacher from Ian Hugo, 9/18/53

[. . .]

September 18, 1953

Mrs. Barbara Stauffacher
San Francisco Museum of Art,
Civic Center,
San Francisco 2, California.

Dear Bobbie,

Thanks for your letter and I am enclosing two color stills from Bells of Atlantis for your publicity. However, these are the only two color stills I have left and I would very much appreciate your seeing I get them back after the film has been shown. I am adding a couple of black and white ones in case some publication wants them.

It is good to know that George Stevens will comment on the film and I will be glad to have an extract for my booklet. In the meanwhile I am sending you also a copy of other comments received since the ones I sent Frank.

Frank said he would write me about details and I suppose he meant to say something about a fee for the showing of the film, so I would appreciate hearing from you or from him on this point. Meanwhile I am arranging to send you the copy by airmail on the 25th so that you will have it in good time.

One point about the projection. It is important that if your projector has a treble control that this control be kept well in the upper range during the entire film. Also a test should be made to get the exactly correct volume in the first part (before the figure in the under-water hulk appears the volume should be kept somewhat higher than after that i.e. volume to be lowered slightly after that). Anais is leaving for Sierra Madre in a few days and expects to be present with you at the showing October 2nd so she can guide you and answer any questions.

I did not, after all take any holiday this summer, and instead worked to complete my new film, taken in the Times Square area of New York. It is now nearing completion but I am afraid the sound track will not be ready before the middle or end of October. The title is Jazz of Lights and I am very much excited about it. It was filmed over the period of the past two years, during which I must have shot over 5000 feet, out of which I am making a first film of about 900 feet, another (more documentary in style will follow as soon as I can get to it).

I hope Frank is not straining himself too much and that his health continues to improve.

With all the best to you both, from Anais and me,

Hugo *[hw]*
Ian Hugo

[hw] P.S. She will probably arrive a few days before. Her address: Box 325, Sierra Madre

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The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

ART IN CINEMA

Seventh Year—Ninth Series

The ART IN CINEMA showings were established to present a more vigorous and liberated attitude towards the film medium. Now, in its seventh year, and with an international reputation, this stimulating experience in film-going has broadened its original objective, and deepened it as well.

Friday, October 2

Art in Cinema is honored to present the distinguished director GEORGE STEVENS in an informal talk, with sections from three of his most outstanding films: "I Remember Mama" (RKO), "A Place in the Sun," and "Shane" (Paramount).

The Way of the Experimental Film

MASQUERAGE by Max de Haas (Netherlands, 1951). A vivid interpretation of primitive expression that has won acclaim and awards. (Cannes, Venice, Edinburgh Festivals, 1952, and first prize Robert J. Flaherty Award.)
PALLE ALONE IN THE WORLD by Astrid Henning-Jensen (Danish, 1952). Premier showing in the United States of this remarkable rendition of the famous Danish children's story about the dream world of a small boy.
BELLS OF ATLANTIS by Ian Hugo (U.S., 1952). Western premiere. The imaginary realism of Hugo's photography, abstractions by LEN LYE, poetry written, spoken, & acted by ANAIS NIN, electronic music by LOUISE & BEEBE BARRON. (Venice Film Festival, 1952.)
GO SLOW ON THE BRIGHTON LINE, a recent BBC television film, in which the London to Brighton Express train makes the 51 mile trip in 4 minutes.

Masters of Mood: Duvivier — Friday, October 9

POIL DE CAROTTE by Julien Duvivier (French, 1932). It led the caravan of the French revival, and it was Harry Baur's first outstanding film performance.

The Poetry of Attack

A PROPOS DE NICE by Jean Vigo (French, 1928). The first film by the brilliant but short lived white-hope of the French cinema.
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SONG OF THE PRAIRIE by Jiri Trnka (Czeck, 1950). A relentless, satirical wit in the form of marionettes, by this master.

Three Women Behind Cameras — Friday, October 16

OLYMPIAD by Leni Riefenstahl (German, 1936-38). The much-praised spectacle, shot by an army of cameramen under her direction, of the poetry of the human body at the Berlin Olympics.
OBNARU by Pat Marks (U. S., 1953). Premiere showing of an accomplished abstract work, accompanied by LIVE sound, to consist of a combo including Gerald Wilson, Teddy Edwards, and other well-known musicians.
WAITING by Flora Mock (U. S., 1952). Produced as a thesis for UCLA's Theatre Arts Department.

The Avant-Garde in France Today — Friday, October 23

PREVIEW of an astounding use of the film medium . . .
TRAITE DE BAVE ET D'ETERNITE (VENON AND ETERNITY). Produced by Marc-Gilbert Guillaumin; directed by Jean-Isidore Isou (France, 1952). Sponsored by Jean Cocteau. With Cocteau, Jean-Louis Barrault, Blaise Cendrars, Danielle Delorme, Marcel Achard, Daniel Gelin, Andre Maurois, Edouard Dhermite, Armand Salacrou. At once a history, a revolt, an example in the form of love story, and a cinematic manifesto of the "Lettrist" poets. *Speaker* ALAN W. WATTS.

From Object to Non-Object — Friday, October 30

LES CHARMES DE L'EXISTENCE (CHARM OF LIFE) by Jean Gremillon and Pierre Kast (France, 1950). Some Prix de Rome winners of the 1890s, and the "objects" of their meditation. (Venice and Edinburgh Film Festivals, 1951).
ADVENTURES OF PRINCE ACHMED produced by Cominius, and made by Lotte Reiniger (German, 1926). Constant transformation of realistic design into abstraction.
ANALOGIES NO. 1 by James E. Davis (U. S., 1953). Further development of Mr. Davis' scintillating color and light, with analogies in nature.
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HYPERBOLIC PARABOLOID by Wheaton Galentine (U.S., 1951). Geometry in movement.

An Experiment and an Experience in 3-D

HY HIRSH and his three-dimensional, non-representational film.
"No one is more willing, eager, and, to tell the truth, able to take advantage of Hollywood's new devices than the experimenters of the cinematographic avant-garde . . . Hirsh's 3-D abstract film has added a new resource to non-objective art." ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN in the *S. F. Chronicle.*

These programs arranged and annotated by Frank Stauffacher

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Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley, Director, San Francisco Museum of Art
Margareta Akermark, Museum of Modern Art Film Library
Lewis Jacobs, author "Rise of the American Film"
Rosalind Kossoff, Director, A. F. Films, Inc.
and with special acknowledgment to Robert Greensfelder, Director of Kinesis and Robert Katz, film authority and teacher.

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Illustration 30. Program announcement for the ninth series, fall 1953. An order blank followed the text.

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Ninth Series, 9/53

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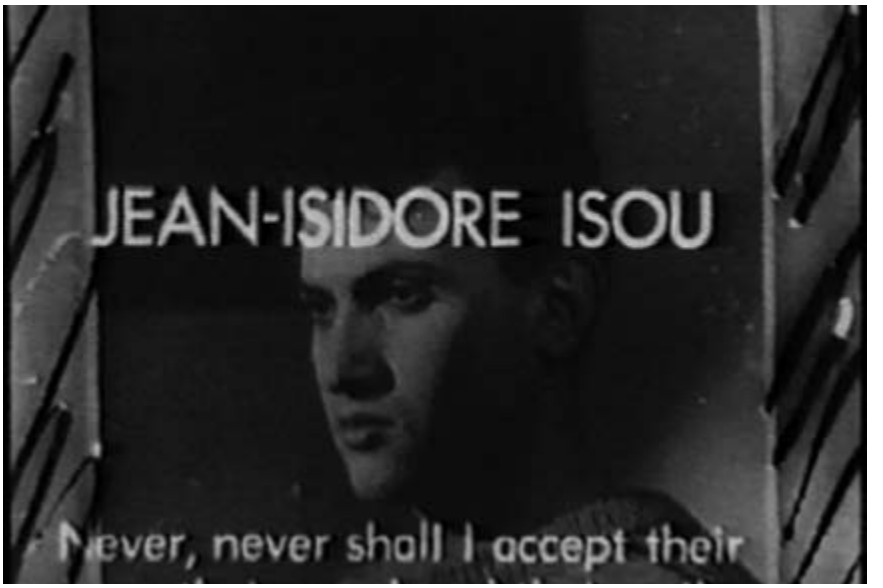

Illustration 31. Frame-grab from video of Jean Isadore Isou's *Traité de bave et d'éternité* (*Venom and Eternity,* circa 1952).

Dhermite, Armand Salacrou. At once a history, a revolt, an example in the form of love story, and a cinematic manifesto of the "Lettrist" poets. *Speaker* ALAN W. WATTS.

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[An order blank followed. Series tickets remained $5.00 or $4.00 for Museum members.]

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Letter to Frank Stauffacher from Ian Hugo, 9/27/53

[. . .]

September 27, 1953

[. . .]

Dear Frank,

As I see that George Stevens will comment on Bells of Atlantis (for which I am very grateful to you) I am enclosing an additional copy of the material I sent you and would consider it a favor if you would see that if possible he reads the extract from Anais' poem which she recites in the film, before he views the film, as well as anything else he has time for.

With thanks in advance, and wishing you the best of luck with your shows,

Sincerely,

Ian Hugo *[hw]*
Ian Hugo

[Original press kit for The Bells of Atlantis sent to Art In Cinema:]

"BELLS OF ATLANTIS"

Produced and photographed by Ian Hugo.

Running time 10 min.
Film 16 mm Kodachrome

Music by Louis and Beebe Barron
Colour effects by Len Lye and Ian Hugo
Acted and recited by Anais Nin

This film, which represents a new attempt at superimposition of colours and images, takes words for inspiration and a point of departure. It is based on a prose poem of Anais Nin and attempts to evoke latent human memories of first sensations and the earliest beginnings of consciousness.

Anais Nin, who acts the sole role in the film, and recites, has done this I believe successfully, in her prose poem, which has been well-known for many years, and the film attempts to make a cinematic counterpoint to her words. Like all attempts to carry over from one art to another, the filmic form has had to be a recreation in other terms, and a counterpoint rather than a translation.

Above all an attempt has been made to use real images with abstract forms, separately and combined, with voice narration and music to express one integrated theme.

The music by Louis and Beebe Barron is an innovation. It is the first orchestrated all-electronic music composed for a film. The original material was pre-formed electronic circuits (no live sounds or microphone used) and was then subjected to electronic situations which create total effect.

In the abstract colour effects he had the collaboration of his friend Len Lye, well-known for his film "Color Box" shown at the Festival of Venice along with his new film "Fox Chase."

Text of prose poem by Anais Nin which inspired the film

"BELLS OF ATLANTIS"

as recited by the author

Part I

My first vision of earth was water-veiled.
I am of the race of men and women
Who see all things through a curtain of sea.

I remember my first birth in water.
I sway and float, stand on boneless toes
Listening for distant sounds—
Sounds beyond the reach of human ears,
Seeing things beyond the reach of human eyes.

Born full of memories of the bells of Atlantis,
Always listening for lost sounds
And searching for lost colors.
Lost in the colors of the Atlantis
The colors running into one another
Without frontiers.

It was like yawning.
I loved the ease and the blindness
Of the suave voyages on the water
Bearing one through obstacles.

Far beneath the level of storms I slept.
I moved within color and music
Like inside a sea-diamond.
There were no currents of thoughts,
Only the caress and flow of desire
Mingling, touching, travelling, withdrawing, wandering—
The endless bottoms of peace;

Part II

(As woman's profile passes left to right across the screen)

"This Atlantis could only be found at night
By the route of the dream"

Part III

(As woman's body is found lying still at the foot of the ship's prow)

"The terror and joy of murders accomplished in silence"

(As woman appears with arms outstretched in form of a cross)

"A monster brought me up to the surface"

(As hands climb up plank, with red sun behind)

"When anger has corroded me I rise;
I always rise after the crucification—
And I am in terror of my ascensions."

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Program Notes for the 10/2/53 Presentation, by Frank Stauffacher

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA—SERIES NINE

Friday, October 2, 1953

***

PALLE ALONE IN THE WORLD	Astrid Henning-Jensen
MASKERAGE	Max de Hass
BELLS OF ATLANTIS	Ian Hugo
GO SLOW ON THE BRIGHTON LINE	BBC

(Intermission: 10 minutes)

George Stevens, and sections from three of his films: I REMEMBER MAMA, A PLACE IN THE SUN, and SHANE.

***

Program Notes

PALLE ALONE IN THE WORLD by Astrid Henning-Jensen (Denmark, 1952). The story is a recent famous Danish children's book by Jens Sigagaard. The five-year old boy, Palle, has a dream in which he alone possesses all the world and its wonders, with no interference from anyone because no one else exists. The candy shop is deserted, and he can take what he desires; the banks have no guards; the streetcar is his to drive, as well as the fire engine and the airplane. But in due time all of these delights go flat because they exist in abundance without restraint, and he is alone. The theme is similar to Rene Clair's early THE CRAZY RAY (PARIS QUI DORT) although Clair had a group of adults "alone in the world." Thus the scene of Palle throwing money down the sewer-grill has a less meaningful moral symbol than desperately bored adults throwing money and jewels off the Eiffel Tower for amusement. This is a very recent arrival in this country, and without English titles. (20 minutes) (Rembrandt Films).

MASKERAGE by Max de Haas; photography by Prosper Dekeukeleire. (Netherlands, 1951) (Venice, Edinburgh Festivals, and winner of the Flaherty Award, 1952). A nocturnal visit to an anthropological museum, where the gallery of primitive masks takes on a life of its own helped along by an inventive sound track. The sounds are produced entirely by tape recordings of natural noises—wind, trains, whistles, voices, drums, etc.—speeded up, slowed down, played backwards, intermingled. These Sound-collages, called "concrete music," or electronic music, are the development of Pierre Shaeffer at the Research Department of the French Radio, and the method has, in short order, become of considerable interest to modern composers—John Cage and Darius Milhaud—to name but two. (10 minutes) (Rembrandt Films).

BELLS OF ATLANTIS by Ian Hugo, from a poem written by Anais Nin; abstract sections by Len Lye, and music by Louis and Beebe Barron. (U.S., 1952). This striking achievement in collaboration between the photographer, the poet, the designer, and the composer, "meeting in a strange territory of free associations" (as Peggy Grenville-Hicks says in an article in July's Vogue Magazine), was a hit at last year's Venice Film Festival. To the many followers of Miss Nin's writings, this fluid translation is a perfect aural and visual interpretation conceived on the level of the subconscious. Here again the music is a sound-collage made by the same tape method described in the preceding film. No musical instruments are used, and every variation of the sound substance is produced by technical manipulation of natural sound on tape. (10 minutes) (Courtesy Mr. Ian Hugo).

GO SLOW ON THE BRIGHTON LINE made by the British Broadcasting Company's television section. By placing the camera in the locomotive's cab, and taking a picture every eight seconds, the entire 51 mile run from London to Brighton is covered in 4 minutes or at a speed of about 800 miles an hour. (4 minutes) (BBC).

GEORGE STEVENS

The films of director George Stevens are among the great achievements of Hollywood, from any point of view you choose to look at them. But his natural reticence and disregard for personal popularity has enabled the man, George Stevens, to remain in the background. Perhaps the most thorough and perfected craftsman in Hollywood today, he is not the type to write a book about it. His understanding of the camera and what it can do is only revealed by his films, and his films are so subtly constructed that this knowledge of technique is not of itself noticeable—until they are re-examined. They are films that are not made off the surface.

Stevens was born in Oakland, California, in 1905. His father, Landers Stevens, was a Pacific Coast matinee idol and his mother, Georgia Cooper, was an equally well-known favorite; his grandmother, Georgia Woodthorpe, was the toast of San Francisco during the Gold Rush days. His grandfather was the picturesque James Stevens, San Francisco attorney of the pioneer era. The late Ashton Stevens, long time dean of Chicago drama critics, was his uncle.

George made his first stage appearance at the old Alcazar Theatre in San Francisco, appearing with the famed tragedienne, Nance O'Neill in "Sappho." After completing his education in the little Mother Lode town of Sonoma, he took up acting as a career. He joined his father's company in the bay region, played juveniles and acted as stage manager. Then, in 1921, he came to Hollywood and his career took a curious detour.

He couldn't catch on as an actor. So instead of appearing in front of the cameras he started to work behind them. He was an assistant, then a second cameraman, then a first cameraman. He switched to gag writing, then wangled a job directing two-reel comedies. This led to features and in 1935 Stevens hit the big time as a topflight director. He has been there ever since, has taken on the dual responsibilities of both producer and director, has never regretted that he wasn't an actor.

Stevens' current project is a film version of Edna Ferber's latest best-selling novel, "Giant," a story of Texas. It is also the first independent film production he has made in his entire career of turning out outstanding box office successes and Academy Award winning films for the major studios. The "Giant" enterprise came about through the association of Miss Ferber, Stevens, and Henry Ginsberg, former head of Paramount Studios. The three joined forces on the project which they jointly own and control.

To the members of this audience, who have sat patiently for some years in this present, not-too-comfortable auditorium, the undiscovered alleyways and labyrinths of our most lively of modern arts may be found in Hollywood as well as in the off-beat film, the "art" film, the experimental film. In an article in the QUARTERLY OF FILM, RADIO, AND TELEVISION, Summer, 1953, Guy L. Cote, after a blistering attack on the "destructionists" of the film medium, says:

"A Dutchman has filmed his country through the rippled reflections in its canals. In Canada, a bespectacled artist is painting colored patterns directly onto a strip of film. A gray-haired Frenchman in a dirty raincoat has wedded his own images and the words of George Bernanos in a way no one has ever done before and has thus created a masterpiece. An American director has adapted AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY into a daring experiment of lingering dissolves and sustained close-ups, an experiment all the more unlikely since it has come straight out of one of Hollywood's major studios. Bert Haanstra, Norman McLaren, Robert Bresson, and George Stevens are the artists of today, and they are finding new riches in the land that the destructionists have declared stale and barren."

F. S. [Frank Stauffacher]

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Text of Talk by George Stevens Presented at Art in Cinema on 10/2/53

I'd like to begin by telling you that a director's lot is not a happy one.

If my present smiling countenance belies this statement, it is only because I am in San Francisco, which I love, in the company of such an admirable group of people, and have the opportunity of talking for an unlimited length of time without being interrupted.

A director's lot is not a happy one, because like everyone in a creative line of endeavor, he is continually attempting the impossible.

A director is continually engaged in trying to put on the screen either something that has never been put there before, or to put on better something that already has been.

And he's continually being told on all sides that it's impossible. The writer is likely to tell him that a scene won't play, or a line of dialogue won't read. The cameraman is likely to tell him that a scene shot in a particular way won't print. The producer is likely to tell him that another scene he wants will cost too much, and the budget won't stand it. An actor is likely to tell him he just can't play a certain scene the way the director wants it.

And the director—he's continually sticking his neck out and telling them it can be done, or maybe it can't, but anyhow, let's try it.

One time in a hundred, he pulls it off. He's an innovator, he's got a touch. The other ninety-nine times, however, he faces a chant of "I told you so's." That, in a nutshell, is the life and times of a director.

But, believe me, it's worth it.

In my own particular instance, acting as I do as both producer and director of the films I make, I find myself fighting with myself a great deal of the time. I'm a man wearing two hats when I make a picture. And at the end of a film, both hats come off pretty battered.

As a producer, I keep telling myself I can't do certain things because they aren't in the budget. As a director, I keep throwing the budget out the window and saying hang the cost.

There are days at a time when Stevens, the producer, and Stevens, the director, aren't on speaking terms. This happens to be one of the few occasions, between productions, when we're getting along well together.

In the course of my time with you here this evening, I'm going to run short takes from three of the last films I made. They are "Shane" with Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur and Van Heflin, "A Place in the Sun" with Elizabeth Taylor, Shelley Winters and Montgomery Clift, and "I Remember Mama" with Irene Dunne.

I've brought them along for two unselfish reasons. The first is that they may better illustrate things about picture-making and what a director strives to achieve, and the second is that they will provide a welcome relief from my voice when I catch any of you nodding.

But, before we go into this, I'd like to put in parenthetically, that however interesting past films may be to a director, or to audiences, he's always looking forward to the next one. The one about-to-be-made is always the big challenge.

So, I'd like at this point to say a few words about Edna Ferber's "Giant," which is to be my next picture, principally because the book itself, which has in its various forms reached more than some seven million circulation, has caused quite a furor in Texas.

Miss Ferber came out to Hollywood a few weeks ago, stopping off en route in San Francisco so long, that by the time she got to Hollywood, we only had a few days left to discuss the story. Said she couldn't tear herself away from here. Anyhow, I brought up this matter of the Texans being up in arms about some of the things she'd written.

She was extremely calm and undisturbed about it.

A veteran of many best-selling novels, many of which have been highly controversial, she refused to be upset.

She told me an anecdote about "Cimarron." When it was written, "Cimarron" was not only banned from sale in Oklahoma, but they burned her in effigy on the State Capitol steps. But when the film "Cimarron" was released, the Governor of Oklahoma invited her there as the State Guest of Honor, and since then, the state has conferred every honor possible upon her.

Having had about a dozen of her best-selling novels transferred to the screen, she said she found that in each instance, anyone who objected to the book, found themselves in favor of it once they saw it in pictorial forms.

She anticipates that will be the case with "Giant."

I hope she's right.

But, regarding the films we are about to see, and discuss, the first will be "I Remember Mama." Since this particular film is about San Francisco, anyone who hasn't seen it may either be regarded as a visitor from out of town, or has no civic pride.

(Here, go into points you wish to make on film—run film)

(Following running, review points made previously; add any further ones; then ask questions. If there are no queries, move on to the next.)

If any further questions on this particular film occur to anyone, we can take them up after the next two films have been run. The next will be "A Place In the Sun."

(Here, outline "American Tragedy," background, earlier picture, formidable prospect, development. Name Academy Award nominations which came out of this picture.)

There were NINE Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Awards nominations given on "A Place In the Sun":

Best Motion Picture	
Montgomery Clift	Best Actor
Shelley Winters	Best Actress
William Mellor	Best Cinematography
Edith Head	Best costume design
William Hornbeck	Best film editing
Harry Brown	Best screenplay
Franz Wachsman	Best musical score
Myself	Best direction

And out of these nine nominations, six Oscars emerged, for Cinematography, Costume Design, Editing, Screenplay, Musical score, Directing. In the 10 minute strip of film I've selected from this picture to show you, you will be able to pick out some instances of why some of these awards were deserved.

(Here, go into editing, cinematography, camerawork, music.)
(Run film, and proceed along same pattern as with "Mama.")
(Handle "Shane" same manner as above two.)

So much for yesterday. Now for tomorrow. I am well aware that the new filming processes, involving 3-D and wide screens and audience participation processes, have caused the same conflicting and often confused reactions in San Francisco that they have elsewhere.

Regardless of how we feel about them, they are the big news in our Hollywood industry today. They are of particular interest, as well as concern, to the director, for someplace in one or more of these new systems which are developing, we hope to find greater scope and latitude to tell our screen story of tomorrow.

I'm not an expert on them, and am not prepared today to write a book on them. I have, however, given them some study, in view of the fact that "Giant" will either be made in some one of them, or else in good old two-dimension.

My theories and conclusions, if they may be called conclusions at this early date, are my own. They do not necessarily stand for the industry.

(Here, review them in your own words.)

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Letter to Ian Hugo from Frank Stauffacher, 10/9/53

October 9, 1953

[. . .]

Dear Ian:

I hope you received the two prints in time for your subsequent showing. Your second print, the new one, arrived Friday, the 2nd, and I had no time to send the previous print back at once to you. Nor did I have immediate time to write you a letter because of all the details connected with the opening night.

BELLS was received very well, but we had a great deal of trouble with the sound beforehand, trying to adjust it so that Anais' voice was clearly understood. For the poem is so important. We followed your instructions, but with our auditorium, as you know, which was never made as a theatre, (with

its parquet marble floors) recorded voices apparantly have to be very hardy to sing out clearly. And it was the reading of the poem that I think bewildered the audience (which, by the way, was quite packed). Perhaps I should have mimeographed the poem along with the program notes, but our previous adjustment of the sound seemed clear, only to have a totally different effect when the hall was full of people. But above all, in the end, BELLS got a very enthusiastic hand.

Stevens was so nervous about his talk, beforehand, that he went in the member's room and studied his notes for his talk, so he didn't even see any of the first half of the program. He and his representative arrived from Hollywood in the afternoon, and what available time we had, we spent adjusting Stevens sections from his films, which were on 35mm. Thus, as usual, the whole thing worked out differently than I had expected, but all in all, turned out to be a great success as a whole program.

I talked with Anais on the phone last night, discussing the sound situation. I told her it was a combination of our tempermental sound set-up, and the actual sound track of BELLS that contributed to its unsatisfactory sound here. However, the sound on the other films was generally hearable, and it was my suggestion that if you could possibly make a re-recording of the voice only (the music was perfect) it might be to the film's benefit—since 16mm projectors and projectionists are by nature an unreliable lot.

The second night of the series is upon me, and I have to cut off this letter for the moment, until early next week, when I'll send more.

BELLS is an extremely effective film, and does really carry forth the whole experimental approach from all angles very successfully. I'm only sorry it didn't quite come off technically, as it should have, here at the Museum. But this sound problem is only a small faction in its over all effect.

Best regards until next week,

Frank Stauffacher

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Program Notes for the 10/9/53 Presentation, by Frank Stauffacher

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA—SERIES NINE

Friday, October 9, 1953

* * *

A PROPOS DE NICE	Jean Vigo
PLAGUE SUMMER	Chester Kessler
SONG OF THE PRAIRIE	Jiri Trnka

Intermission (10 minutes)

POIL DE CAROTTE	Julien Duvivier

* * *

Program Notes

THE POETRY OF ATTACK

"If you regard all experiment as affectation and all that bewilders you as a calculated personal affront, and if you ask of art chiefly that it be easy to take, you are advised not to waste your time seeing Jean Vigo's … (films) … ; go on back to sleep, lucky Pierre, between the baker's wife and the well-digger's daughter. If you regard all experiment as ducky, and all bewilderment as an opportunity to sneer at those who confess their bewilderment, and if you ask of art only that it be outre, I can't silence your shrill hermetic cries, or prevent your rush to the Fifth Avenue Playhouse; I can only hope to God I don't meet you there. If, on the other hand, you are not automatically sent either into

ecstasy or catalepsy by the mere mention of avant-gardism, if your eye is already sufficiently open so that you don't fiercely resent an artist who tries to open it somewhat wider, I very much hope that you will see these films." This quotation, by James Agee, from a review in the NATION, applies not only to the Vigo films, but to all the films that Art In Cinema has been showing for seven years. At least, Agee's remark is precisely what we always sought to convey to our audience.

A PROPOS DE NICE by Jean Vigo; photographed by Boris Kaufmann (France, 1928). Jean Vigo died in 1934 at the age of 29 in the Paris where he was born, leaving behind him but a slim body of work consisting of four films. But this work has had a profound effect on, not only the French cinema, but the development of the film everywhere. Maybe the word "development" is wrong here, for he established no style, no disciples, no school. Quoting from Joseph and Harry Feldman's JEAN VIGO (British Film Institute): "Vigo's entire output can be seen in barely 3 1/2 hours; but these 3 1/2 hours are to the cinema what the thin folio of Keats' complete poetry is to literature. With two short subjects and two extremely modest feature productions, Vigo left a permanent mark on film history. … The financing of Vigo's films was rather unorthodox. He was actually an amateur film maker. He had nothing to do with the industry as such. He was sublimely indifferent to the commercial aspects of film production. Lydu, his wife, financed his first film as a gesture of faith and love; he paid for his second himself; and a French industrialist, who had never previously been connected with the film industry, financed his third and fourth films. As an amateur, however, Vigo was able to create professional films." Indeed, his few films have placed him, as any work of the film's history will show, among the greatest film creators.

His four films are: A PROPOS DE NICE (1928); JEAN TARIS (1932); ZERO DE CONDUITE (1933); L'ATLANTE (1934): For A PROPOS DE NICE it has been extremely difficult to find prints, and this one we see tonight is from the private collection of James Card of Rochester, N.Y., perhaps the only copy in the United States, and it has no beginning and end titles.

As a first film, it is a long way from the development of his last two. It is simply an exploration of Nice during the festival season, but with an ironic ruthlessness born of a combination of his distaste for Nice, and an intense belief in truth. In presenting this film at the Vieux Colombier in Paris, Vigo said, "A PROPOS DE NICE is only a rough draft. In this film, the description of a whole town begging from sheer laziness, we are spectators at the trail of a particular world. After indicating this life and atmosphere of Nice—and, alas, elsewhere—the film proceeds to a generalized impression of gross pleasures, to different signs of grotesque existence, of flesh and of death. These are the last twitchings of a society that neglects its own responsibility to the point of giving nausea and making you an accomplice in a revolutionary solution." (Courtesy James Card) (25 minutes).

PLAGUE SUMMER by Chester Kessler (U.S., 1952). "An animated cartoon film adapted from Kenneth Patchen's novel THE JOURNEY OF ALBION MOONLIGHT. It is a record of a journey of six allegorical characters through landscapes brutalized by war and "the chronicle of an inner voyage through the mental climate of a sensitive artist, in the war-torn summer of 1940." (Quote by Chester Kessler in Roger Manville's EXPERIMENT IN THE FILM). Mr. Kessler will augment this program note in a short address to the audience. We are extremely sorry to state that Kenneth Patchen, who was also to be present, will not be able to attend. (From Society of Cinema Arts) (14 minutes).

SONG OF THE PRAIRIE. Produced by Czechoslovak State Film; directed by George (or Jiri) Trnka; music by John Rychlik. (Czechoslovakia, 1950). This hilarious bit of buffoonery, a satire on our own horse-operas, was made by Jiri Trnka, a master of marionettes, or actually in this film, of puppets. They are photographed frame by frame, and the movements are adjusted between each shot. His most outstanding film done in this manner was THE EMPEROR'S NIGHTINGALE, a feature length production. Coming from behind the iron curtain in the form of a satirical attack on an American style in films, it turns out to be witty, sparkling and spirited, and if propaganda, not very good propaganda for what it apparently is intended to be. (Contemporary Films) (18 minutes).

POIL DE CAROTTE by Julien Duvivier, from the novel by Jules Renard; with Harry Baur, Catherine Fontenoy, and Robert Lynen. (French, 1931). The 30's saw a procession of the finest French films that have come from the industry. Many film historians say that this flowering was due to the fecund spirit of the avant-garde of the 20's, and indeed, almost without exception, the ranks of France's best directors were filled with the "enfant-terribles" of the 20's: Rene Clair, Jean Renoir, Jean Vigo, Jacques Feyder, Claude Autant-Lara, etc. Julien Duvivier, also, brought a constantly fertile imagination to his films, many of them outright masterpieces without qualification. (UN CARNET DE BAL, LA BELLE

EQUIPE, PEPE LE MOKO). The sensitive POIL DE CAROTTE was the first of France's procession of the 30's. It displayed a thorough understanding of the sound medium at a time when sound was a bug-a-boo to film technique, and the technique in this film was composed of film rhythms without regard to the supposed requirements of literary narrative. As such, it succeeded in portraying abnormal psychological states by indirection. This story of a child's suffering, frustrations, and despairs reveals, as in the recent FORBIDDEN GAMES, the fact that between the world of the child and the world of an adult is a gap too tragically wide to breach. (University of Wisconsin) (70 minutes).

Frank Stauffacher

(Music played during the intermission is RING AROUND THE MOON, a composition by Harry Partch, played by the Gate 5 Ensemble, on record).

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Program Notes for the 10/16/53 Presentation, by Frank Stauffacher

ART IN CINEMA—Friday, October 16, 1953

* * *

WAITING	Flora Mock
UBNARU and THINGS TO COME	Patricia Marx

(Intermission—10 minutes)

OLYMPIAD	Leni Riefenstahl

* * *

Program Notes

THREE WOMEN BEHIND CAMERAS

There have been few women attracted to film directing. Without looking deeply into the history of film we find Germaine Dulac and Marie Epstein in France, Leontine Sagen, Lotte Reiniger, and Leni Riefenstahl in Germany, and none in America—at least none who have made much of an impression on the annals of the American film. Since the war, however, Ida Lupino has turned from actress to director in films, and has displayed high sensitivity and talent in commercial production. In France there is Nichole Verdres, who put together PARIS 1900, and the current LIFE BEGINS TOMORROW. But perhaps of more interest, is the rise of women directors in the American experimental field. The experimental film—far from the heavy business responsibilities of the commercial film, comparatively inexpensive, and freer in conception—has an unusual number of gifted women creators. Maya Deren can be accredited with starting, or, at least renewing, the post-war interest in experiments in the film in this country. Mary Ellen Bute, too, has long been associated with abstract films. Coming closer to home, Sarah Katherine Arledge and Josephine Booth are memorable for their work in the dance film. The three women directors to be shown on our program this evening are representative of three of the most widely different conceptions that one could find.

WAITING by Flora Mock (U.S., 1952). Several years ago at one of our "Art In Cinema" showings, a young man from Los Angeles arrived just before the showing with a small film in his hand, and with vociferous praise for this film which, he said, was made by an extremely talented young woman in his film class at UCLA. Sight unseen, we took a gamble and put it on the program; it was called PAPER MOON, by Flora Mock. Unfortunately, this writer was behind the screen tampering with some sudden crisis with our eternally tempermental sound system and did not get to see PAPER MOON, although the hand it received was proof that the gamble was justified. WAITING, is a far more accomplished film, however, and has received considerable praise for its ingenuity. Made as a partial fulfillment for a thesis in UCLA's Drama Department, it is really an experimental film that comes off, in the best sense of the word. (10 minutes) (Kinesis, Inc.)

THINGS TO COME and OBNARU by Patricia Marx (U.S., 1952–53). These two non-objective films represent an advanced development of a well-known school of film-making here in San Francisco:

The non-objective film which was started by Harry Smith and Jordan Belson. Miss Marx is a disciple of Smith's, and she says that before seeing his films, she had some success in her native Queensland, Australia, as a realistic landscape painter. This all disappeared when she saw Smith's films; they opened up a different world, and a vastly different landscape. A word should be said about the "Live" orchestra accompanying these films tonight: The music stems from Bop, which in no way has any relation to Dixieland, or traditional jazz; but spills out according to feeling. We might say it is closer to the impulsive creative process of a painting by Jackson Pollock. It cannot follow a traditional chord-pattern as Dixieland jazz must. Bop in its most developed state, as in Dizzy Gillespie, is a far more meaningful music than this description indicates, but tonight the musicians will be improvising, without rehearsal, depending on the stimulus of the non-objective forms that pass before their eyes. There has been no "ensemble" rehearsal. (15 minutes) (Patricia Marx)

OLYMPIAD a film produced and directed by Leni Riefenstahl for the German Government, 1936-38. This spectacular and beautiful record of the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936 was made by Germany's most famous woman Director, and one who made considerable impression on the whole film scene in general. A most powerful talent equal to any male director, she was also a handsome and talented actress. Many of us remember a notable film by her during the thirties, THE BLUE LIGHT, in which she took the lead, besides directing it. OLYMPIAD is a poem not only on the human body but on all movement, all grace, all perfection, associated with games. Thus Leni Riefenstahl's conception and accomplishment reverts back to the classic Greek Olympic Games as an embodiment of perfection. The full length OLYMPIAD runs some 4 1/2 hours, making it impossible for general programming. This is Part Two, running 80 minutes. (Society of Cinema Arts)

F. S. [Frank Stauffacher]

(George Stevens' talk here on October 2 has resulted in a considerable general interest in his older films. The Balboa Theatre will present A PLACE IN THE SUN for a week's run: October 28 to November 3. Mr. Stevens will appear on the Museum Television program, DISCOVERY, on Sunday, November 1.)

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Letter to Raymond Rohauer from Frank Stauffacher, 11/10/53

November 10, 1953

Mr. Raymond Rohauer
610 North Robertson Blvd.
Hollywood 46, California

Dear Raymond:

Now I will have a short breather to write you a little more information on the showing of VENOM.

Under the circumstances, not having seen much of the film beforehand, and then without English subtitles, I had a hell of a time writing program notes "blind," you might say. And this kind of film calls for program notes. So I did my best, using only as sources, two articles (one of them extremely negative) and what remarks you yourself had told me. I tried to keep it on the fence, neither going off either side—like anyone seeing the film would do, either frothing at the mouth in rejecting it, or gleefully shouting in ecstatic acceptance of it. All my program notes have been, of necessity, as unemotional and unbiased as possible, leaving the film to speak for itself. So much for the program notes.

Alan Watts couldn't say very much in his talk about the film either, since he hadn't seen it—<u>any</u> of it. But he held forth in general about movements of destruction in the arts, and got the biggest hand yet given at Art In Cinema—possibly because he is such a brilliant speaker, and of amazing delivery. He talked only briefly.

I ran the film right through without stop, and I, myself, was amazed at the large number of people who stuck it out, and gave it a <u>big</u> hand. For it is long—too long, I'm afraid, to release Commercially. <u>Everyone</u> said the first chapter was the most interesting, witty, and provocative avant-garde idea they've seen. During the second chapter, they started to drift out because, as I understand it, reading the subtitles against the motley image-cutting began to be wearing on the eyes. Towards the end,

others left because it was just too much for them. A segment of the audience was enraged that all the well-known people, as advertised, were not really a part of the film, and as one guy said, "It's really a con job." They felt cheated.

All, however, have nothing but respect to Clement for his job in translating a very witty and well-written script, and having caught it in English as he did.

As I told you over the phone, I couldn't get a real grip on the audience's reaction without getting in the questionaires (which were general). Here's some comments after VENOM: "Exciting, I'll be interested to see what next." "Truly dreadful" "good television" "All in all, a very fine thing" "Cut to 1/3 its length would be very exciting" "I was interested throughout" "Fascinating, in spite of personal disagreement with lettrism" "I found this as absorbing and stimulating as any picture of the series (in spite of eyestrain)" "wonderful movie" "godawful" "Pseudo-intellectual vagaries" "immortal art of … Isou," etc. etc. and one letter from a poet, Robert Duncan, who will contact you with a list of names, to send to Isou, as an appreciation to his film. I'm still getting these questionaires in, and will send them on to you as soon as they're tallied up. They will give you a good insight into the audiences' reaction.

I'm sorry, no press previews. Those of the rags who were here hated it, apparently; and you must take their silence as being better than their public damning the thing. But there are some all-over reviews that will be coming out in little magazines, and this Robert Duncan is going to write about it with wild enthusiasm.

So there you are. The audience fell in two heaps, either liking or hating it. Which you expected.

Thanks for the letters enclosed to the Flying Tiger Co. but I believed you. No need proving it.

Called up the photographers to see about prints, and he will have them ready tomorrow night. I'll send them right away.

Right now, busy with seeing how the series as a whole came out financially. Will write in day or so.

Regards,

Frank Stauffacher

CC. Program notes for October 30
and questionaire.

P. S. Will send VENOM script in a few days too.

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Letter to Ian Hugo from Frank Stauffacher, 11/10/53

November 10, 1953

[. . .]

Dear Ian:

I'm terribly sorry that I've been late in following my first letter as I promised, but I always forget the piling up of details connected with these showings as they continue, and all of my time has been spent on them to the limit of my somewhat depleted energy. Now the series is over, and I am glad it is over. Besides the work involved, there is the added annoyance of having to be blamed personally, by the audience-at-large, for films that were failures, but never thanked by them for films that are successful. People will flock to see experimental films, but seem to be affronted by experiments they don't understand.

Still, I think this audience is a good one; and I shouldn't kick too much because according to returns on a questionaire given out at the last program, the general reaction was very good. These returns are

still coming in, and when they're all tallied I will send you a copy of it. I think it highly informative—especially the comments and general remarks. It indicates the general tendancy in the air.

Throughout the five programs we had constant trouble with our sound system. We could get excellent reproduction in an empty hall, but when full, it changed the acoustics. Never before had we had so much trouble, and it was due to a mishandling of recent sound installation. It was only towards the end of the series that we balanced it out correctly.

I am very much interested in what you tell me about your new system of color and light projection, and your new film, JAZZ OF LIGHTS, and hope to be able to see it. At the present time I'm closing up the books on Series Nine Art In Cinema, and don't expect to do it again for quite a while. It's a natural reaction, because my place is making films, and showing them—while enormously satisfying to a degree—is limited to me personally.

The little magazines hereabouts are due to come out with reviews on the entire series, and I'll send them to you when they do. The press continues to not review A in C, except large plugs in the beginning, but which, fortunately, does not have any effect on our crowds, which are still as big as ever.

All best to you, and please give my best wishes to Anais.

Sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

CC. Set of program notes
Color stills.

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Letter to Amos Vogel from Frank Stauffacher, 11/18/53

November 18, 1953

Dear Amos:

Was glad to get your recent letter, with the very good news of Cinema 16's increasing success, and of great importance—the soon-arrival of an addition to your family. I was most happy to hear this announcement, indeed, and so was Bobbie, and give our best to Marcia. Yes, it will complicate things a little, but they are complications that you will surely enjoy.

Art In Cinema was successful, as ever, I'm glad to say. But it was a difficult series to conduct, and an outrageously costly one. Since we were not bound by the usual Museum of Modern Art contract (having no films from them) we were able to sell extra tickets each night, at $1.50. But, of course, the majority of the sales were on subscriptions. Even so, it was still a costly series.

For example, this Bill Snyder, of whom you speak, wanted $150.00 and $75.00 for PALLE and MASKERAGE respectively. I haggled on the phone with him, he came down to $100.00 and $50.00, but this is an outrage. I took them because I needed them. Furthermore, I <u>did</u> ask him for CRIN BLANC, but he said it was not available. If you know him, and have a chance to tell him, say PALLE and MASKERAGE were good films, but <u>certainly</u> not worth his price, and that I was rather offended that I could not take a crack at CRIN BLANC. If George Stevens could come up from Hollywood and talk to our audience which I consider one of the best in the country, Snyder could have considered renting me CRIN BLANC. But probably at $1000.00.

Of course, VENOM AND ETERNITY did enrage more than half the audience, and, as I expected, half walked out. The other half were the youth, the local avant-garde poets and so forth, and they thought the film a great achievement. I personally don't think much of the thing; but in keeping with our policy, thought it essential to show. But in anybody's consideration, it is much too long.

Thank you very much for including my name in your symposium on poetry and the film. It sounds like it was really outstanding.

Stevens was quite a success. Zinnemann was going to come up, then couldn't because of other committements, and so through Stevens' representative, he agreed to speak, and select his own reels to show, even brought them up himself under his arm, on the plane. Seemed to like talking to an unHollywood audience. He didn't ask a fee, only his expenses and his rep's expenses, which didn't come to as much as Snyder's charge to us for PALLE.

I will take your tip to stay clear of DEMENTIA.

Passed out questionaires to the audience the last night, on all the films shown. They're still coming in, in the mail, and are a great aid and an interesting "depth" gauge.

Thanks for your letter again, and please don't forget to wish our best to Marcia, and our congradulations to you, Amos.

Sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

[On October 28, 1953, Cinema 16 held a symposium called "Poetry and the Film." The featured guests were Maya Deren, Willard Maas, Arthur Miller, Dylan Thomas, and Parker Tyler. For the text of the symposium, see Cinema 16, *pp. 202–212.]*

Letter to John Ford from Barbara Stauffacher, 12/17/53

December 17, 1953

Mr. John Ford
6860 Odin Street
Hollywood
California

Dear Mr. Ford:

Last year the Smithsonian Institution in collaboration with the Department of State commissioned an exhibition for distribution abroad on the American Film entitled "Aspects of the American Film: Fifteen Directors." The exhibition, consisting entirely of still pictures, is now circulating in Germany and South America. It was based on the positive creative contributions made by fifteen of the top film directors in the commercial and documentary fields. Starting with Griffith the directors are Sennett, Chaplin, De Mille, Ford, Huston, Capra, Wyler, Zinnemann, Stevens, Minelli, United Productions of America, Flaherty, Van Dyke, and Lorentz. The exhibition was compiled by Frank Stauffacher who is also associated with the San Francisco Museum of Art.

We are now planning to have a film series based on this same theme here at the Museum starting in early Spring. There will be fifteen evenings, each devoted to the works and ideas of one director. There will be a guest speaker each time—in many cases the director, when he is available, and one or two of his most outstanding films.

There is no difficulty getting your films as they are available on 16mm. We plan to show STAGECOACH and THE LONG VOYAGE HOME. We would like to show TOBACCO ROAD, but we are at a loss as to how to get it.

I am sure you would have some ideas on what films of yours would make a good combination for an evening. Any ideas you may have will be most appreciated. In the event you can suggest an

appropriate speaker on your films and your approach to the film, or if you would consider speaking yourself, we would be most interested in hearing about it.

Mr. Lou Smith, representative of the Screen Director's Guild, has been kind enough to help us with this project.

Many thanks.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Stauffacher
Film Department

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Early Description of Art in Cinema's Tenth and Eleventh Series

FIFTEEN AMERICAN FILM DIRECTORS AT THE MUSEUM

by Frank Stauffacher

The American film has been the subject of the spoken and written word for some fifty years. The bulk of all this has been concerned with the people who appear in it, the stories they act in, and the people who finance it. Rarely does this ocean of words get around to the most important creative people of the subject—the directors. It is long overdue. They are the busiest people in the art of the film because they are the artists of the film, generally out of sight behind the camera.

The San Francisco Museum of Art's famous ART IN CINEMA asked a contingent of the most important American film directors and other film artists to come to San Francisco as guest speakers in behalf of their own work. Their kind and agreeable cooperation has made this year's ART IN CINEMA series an unprecedented study of the American film—unprecedented because it is exceedingly uncommon that these film-makers have the time or opportunity to talk publicly of the subject they know better than anyone else.

This treatment of the American film has been patterned after a large circulating exhibition designed for the Smithsonian Institution and the U.S. Department of State a few years ago by this writer. Made to circulate abroad, it sought to show some of the really positive achievements in the American film, through examples of the work of fifteen American directors. Being aware of the most popular elements in our films abroad—and they are very popular—the exhibition tried to clarify and interpret them in the light of our native culture; it sought to make clear a popular art that, on the surface, seems formless and shifting. Taking the big traditions or styles—such as the Western, the Slapstick, the Musical, the Spectacle, etc.—the exhibition helped to formulate our most alive and virile contributions to the world's history of the film. In doing this, it seemed to become a re-evaluation of our American film to those of us who, through familiarity and habit, had tended to forget.

Breaking away from its usual programming of presenting strictly experimental and off-beat films, ART IN CINEMA is here dealing with what at first would seem an about-face. But with these nine years of outstanding programs, no stringent policy has existed but that of being concerned with what is worth your interest in the film. True, our programs grew out of the avant-garde, but there is only so much avant-garde available. The very nomenclature dates the subject, and any consideration of the film is nothing if it is not as flexible as the film itself. And above all, ART IN CINEMA has seldom taken the role of critic.

This venture of trying to get closer to the active film industry in our programs was highly successful last year with the appearance on Series Nine of director George Stevens. His zeal and intense understanding of his medium was conveyed in a way not possible by professional lecturers. The air of celluloid and arc lights was there, not the air of books.

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS will be presented in two series, the Tenth and Eleventh of ART IN CINEMA's famous yearly film activities. The Tenth,

Illustration 32. Barbara Stauffacher (Solomon), Frank Stauffacher, and daughter Chloe at Stinson Beach, circa 1954. Courtesy Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

beginning on Friday, April 9, will be inaugurated by George Sidney, the director who is the president of the Screen Directors Guild, speaking about the greatest innovator of them all, D. W. Griffith. Griffith's fabulous 1916 epic, INTOLERANCE, will be shown as a crucible from which came practically every future development of film technique. It was also a crucible out of which came the outstanding early players in American films.

The succeeding programs have not been arranged to fit a progression, but according to the availability of the speakers. On April 15, Fred Zinnemann of HIGH NOON and FROM HERE TO ETERNITY fame, will be guest speaker, with his earlier film THE SEARCH.

The Western Tradition in the film will be exemplified by its greatest exponent, John Ford. Kenneth Macgowan, who has been producer for John Ford, will take the rostrum on April 23, to speak about and show Ford's personal favorite, YOUNG MR. LINCOLN.

On April 30 Vincente Minnelli, whose brilliant direction has been responsible for such outstanding films as MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS and AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, will speak about his approach to directing, and show sections of these films, as well as others.

On May 7 Cecil B. de Mille will be represented by director Mitchell Leisen who was formerly de Mille's Art Director. THE CRUSADES will be shown and discussed.

Stephen Bosustow, founder and president of famous UPA, the group that created an entirely new animated film, will be present on May 14 to tell us about this revolution in camera design, and will bring with him examples, from GERALD MCBOING-BOING, to THE TELL-TALE HEART.

The Documentary Film will be represented on May 20 by Willard Van Dyke, who carries the mantle of the documentary tradition from the great Robert Flaherty. Van Dyke shares that evening with Pare Lorentz's films in which he had a creative part.

For further information on this outstanding series call the San Francisco Museum of Art—Art in Cinema. Tickets are now on sale at the museum: $7.50 for Series Ten ($6.00 to Museum members).

Tickets to Series Ten and Series Eleven covering all fifteen directors are $12.00 ($10.00 to Museum members). Single tickets will be sold only at the door the evening of each performance: $1.25 ($1.00 to Museum members). For tickets write to: Art In Cinema, San Francisco Museum of Art, Civic Center, San Francisco 2.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Barbara Stauffacher from Vincent Minnelli, 1/18/54

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures
Culver City
California

January 18, 1954

[. . .]

Dear Miss Stauffacher:

It was a great honor to find my name among those directors chosen for your series on the American Film.

I think "An American in Paris" and "Meet Me in St. Louis" would be the films most suitable for your purpose, and M-G-M assures me that they would be happy to supply these films or any you may prefer for showing. I would be glad to come to San Francisco if I am free when you show these films. If this is not possible, anyone you suggest as a speaker would be fine with me.

I think this is a very wonderful project and I am sure it will be a great success.

Sincerely,

Vincente Minnelli *[hw]*
Vincente Minnelli

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Barbara Stauffacher from Willard Van Dyke, 1/25/54

Affiliated Film Producers, inc.
Irving Jacoby Willard Van Dyke
164 East 38th Street,
New York 16, N.Y.
Murray Hill 6-9279

[. . .]

Dear Bobbie:

Thank you for the nice letter.

Of course I would love to come out for the May 20th date. Although I do not expect to have any reason to make a business trip, something might come up. In any case, I would keep the expenses to a minimum since I would be staying with my sister in Oakland.

Can you tell me what films will be shown so that I may be thinking about what to say? I am a little dismayed at the idea of talking about Pare [Lorentz]. It has been many years since he has done anything and yet he is still a relatively young man. I admire his work a great deal, however, and I think I can find the right things to say. Certainly I would like to try.

Our best to you and Frank.

Sincerely,

Willard *[hw]*
Willard Van Dyke

WVD: ep

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Letter to Willard Van Dyke from Barbara Stauffacher, 1/27/54

January 27, 1954

Mr. Willard Van Dyke
164 East 38th Street
New York 16
New York

Dear Willard:

We are all very happy that you will be able to come to San Francisco for the May 20th date. I'm sure it will be a fine evening and we look forward to seeing you again very much.

When I wrote to Pare Lorentz about the series he also suggested that he would like to come to San Francisco if it could be arranged. Now, when I write to him of the evening and that you will be here, I think it best to say that you were planning to be out here in any case. Okay?

After mulling it over with Frank this seemed a beginning to work on for the evening: THE RIVER (30 min.), a portion of THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAIN (10 min.), VALLEY TOWN (30 min.), and then portions, perhaps the country footage and the fast cut part, of THE CITY (15 min.). This would come to about 1 hour and 25 minutes. There should also be another short film, or section of a film, of yours. You can talk between the films or at the beginning or end of each section. The evening being on two directors will naturally fall into two parts, with an intermission separating them. What do you think? The whole evening should not be more than 2 and 1/2 hours,

I will keep you posted on any new developments.

All best to you and Barbara.

Sincerely,

Barbara Stauffacher
Film Department

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Letter to Barbara Stauffacher from Fred Zinnemann, 1/29/54

Magna Theatre Corporation
1041 North Formosa Avenue
Hollywood 46, California
Hollywood 7-5111

January 29, 1954

Dear Mrs. Stauffacher:

I am delighted to hear that you have set dates for your film series dealing with directors. I have made note of the date, Friday, May 7th.

Would you please let me know whether 16mm films will be satisfactory for you or whether you will want 35mm prints? The sooner you can give me this information the better. Incidentally, I would appreciate it if you would keep Mr. Lou Smith informed of all of this. I am sending him a copy of this letter for his information.

As I mentioned in my previous letter, I probably will be unable to be your guest speaker. I expect to be away from California at that time in connection with the production of OKLAHOMA. Therefore I would recommend that you consider a substitute speaker. You may have someone excellent in mind

and if so, please give me his name. I would be glad to meet with him and discuss the approach to the program and the speech.

In regard to your statement that the evening would be arranged in any way that I think best: I was wondering whether you wouldn't want some sort of uniform policy governing all fourteen evenings? No doubt you have given this matter a great deal of thought. If you do have some policy that you wish to adhere to, I would be grateful if you would let me know since I have had no experience in this type of project. It would be a shame if I were to make this an amateurish sort of approach, because I believe that your idea is excellent and I strongly feel that it deserves a professional kind of presentation. Please let me hear more about your thoughts on this subject.

As to the pictures I would like to present: The two films which I like best are THE SEARCH and HIGH NOON. However, I feel that it would be too long and tiring for an audience to sit through two pictures and to have to listen to a speech in addition. On the other hand, I am hesitant to show isolated episodes from pictures. Also I am not sure how to talk about my work since I never follow any clearly or rationally preconceived method, but rely to a great extent on instinct and feeling.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

Fred Zinnemann *[hw]*
Fred Zinnemann

FZ/bp

[. . .]

cc: Mr. Lou Smith
340 N. Rodeo Drive
Beverly Hills, California

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✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Letter to Fred Zinnemann from Frank Stauffacher, 2/1/54

February 1, 1954

Mr. Fred Zinnemann
Magna Theatre Corporation
1041 North Formosa Avenue
Hollywood 46
California

Dear Mr. Zinnemann:

Thank you very much for your good letter of January 29. I'll try to answer you rather than Mrs. Stauffacher, because I am aiding her and I may be able to further clarify the project in mind.

Since it will be a series concerned with American directors and their work, or styles, you might say, it is naturally our desire to have as speakers the directors rather than substitutes. However, it is impossible, of course, for us to expect each director because of his other committments. Yet we are doing our best to be sure of those directors who are available because we may be faced with more substitute speakers than directors, and the whole project would lose considerable value as a much needed concentration on the director's themselves. It will lose the project's vitality. For example, HIGH NOON has been shown so constantly that to show it here without you would be little more than a regular theatrical showing. And we cannot think of a substitute. How about our changing the date, and putting you on Thursday, April 15th, or Friday, April 23rd?

We have arranged the Fourteen Directors series (which, by the way, is now Fifteen Directors) into two separate presentations, seven in the Spring, and seven in the Fall. So far we have confirmed Stanley Kramer, as a producer, to speak on the first night, April 9th, followed by John Ford, with Kenneth Macgowan as speaker; Vincent Minnelli and Cecil B. deMille have been exceedingly cooperative but so far no confirmation as to dates, and the same with Steve Bosustow for UPA, although Willard Van Dyke will come out from N. Y. to speak about both Lorentz and himself on the Documentary film. The second section of the series in the Fall, with Sennett, Capra, Huston, Stevens, Disney and Flaherty, is also partially confirmed.

As to a uniform policy governing the entire series, it is fairly flexible. The idea, however, will be to determine the American film as differing, say, from the French Film, the Italian Film, etc. While this is rather vague because so many nationalities have gone to make up a native American film (and visa versa), the attempt to define the American Film is exceedingly worthy, I'm sure. Does this help to clarify what we want to do? Aside from this general subject, the work of each director is simply open to their individual styles, or their tastes, their ways of working, etc., and it can be very informal without being amateurish. In fact, I think it is better to be rather informal because of the very same quality that you mentioned yourself—relying to a great extent on instinct and feeling in so far as talking about your work.

I am very happy about your choice of THE SEARCH and HIGH NOON. The reason we thought of using a section of one is because it would be, as you noted, quite long for the two features plus a talk. However, it is very understandable on your part to hesitate showing an isolated piece, although when George Stevens came up for us last October, his chosen sections were not at all objectionable, in fact, extremely interesting.

As for the size, it's easier for us to use 16mm, but no trouble to convert to 35mm. If you do have both films on 16mm, then that is fine. If you can't get 16mm, then we do a changing in the projection room, and have 35mm heads installed very easily.

We hope this is somewhat of a help to you in our project. Again, we are very appreciative of your interest.

Many thanks.

Most sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

FS/bs
cc: Mr. Lou Smith

Reprinted by permission of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

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Letter to Barbara Stauffacher from Willard Van Dyke, 2/2/54

[. . .]

February 2, 1954

[. . .]

Dear Bobbie:

Since I never see Pare Lorentz the question will not arise, but of course I will keep up the fiction of a business trip.

May I question the programming? Frankly I am not sure that VALLEY TOWN, in its entirety, is the best choice. I would like it better if you were to show THE PHOTOGRAPHER, or sections from a number of films. The song from VALLEY TOWN always causes comment and could be shown alone. The opening sequence of AMERICAN FRONTIER is quite representative of my work. The lunch

sequence of THE CITY certainly is a good choice, and there is a short section of BROKEN APPOINTMENT that shows good documentary handling of dialogue.

Since VALLEY TOWN was made so long ago, and since the whole program as you outline it seems to consist of films of social criticism, I think the audience would get a false idea of my work today. The early documentary films were made at a time of self-examination. Today the film maker faces a different problem and is making another kind of film. This is not to say that one kind is better than the other, but rather to face clearly the fact that our films are very different today. As a matter of fact, any discussion of the development of the documentary film must go beyond 1940, the date of the newest film on your program.

May I have your reaction?

Our best to both of you,

Sincerely,

Willard *[hw]*
Willard Van Dyke

WVD: ep

Reprinted by permission of Neil Van Dyke.

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Letter to Fred Zinnemann from Barbara Stauffacher, 3/18/54

March 18, 1954

[. . .]

Dear Mr. Zinnemann:

Thank you for your kind letter of March 17.

I called Lou Smith immediately to see if anything could be done simply because of the importance of your appearance to our program and to the many people who are looking forward to seeing you here. We were anxious to change our plans to agree with your convience and Mr. Smith as you know called Mr. Minnelli. He very kindly agreed to come for the April 15 date leaving April 30 free.

We are greatly indebted to you for agreeing to this new date, April 30, and including this trip to San Francisco in your plans though you are under a great deal of pressure. We feel rather guilty continually confronting you with new dates when you are so pressed for time and we sincerely appreciate your consideration to us.

We will now plan on April 30 and hope all goes well. The announcements are already printed, but we shall notify the press of the change in date. We have received confirmation from the Fairmont Hotel that rooms will be held for you and your family.

Many thanks.

Most sincerely yours,

Barbara Stauffacher
Film Department

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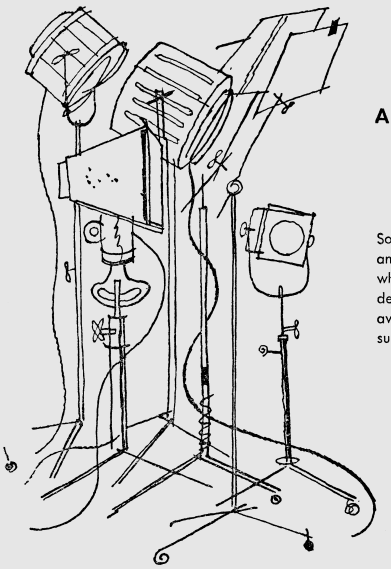
The San Francisco Museum of Art presents



Art in Cinema

Aspects of the American film:

the Work of Fifteen Directors

Some of the most positive achievements in the American film—its established traditions and recent styles—are to be shown through films selected by the directors themselves, whose cooperation as guest speakers has made this project possible. It is an unprecedented contribution to the study of the best in American film. When the director is not available, the discussion will be conducted by an eminent authority on the particular subject concerned.

(ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM will be shown in two series, as noted below.)

SERIES TEN:

April 9 to May 20, 1954

The Pioneer: **D. W. Griffith**
New Treatments in Realism: **Fred Zinnemann**
Tradition of the West: **John Ford**
Tradition of the Musical: **Vincente Minnelli**
The Pageant of History: **Cecil B. de Mille**
Revolution in Animation: **UPA**
Tradition of the Documentary Film: **Pare Lorentz and Willard Van Dyke**

SERIES ELEVEN:

September 10 to October 29, 1954

The Art of Slapstick: **Mack Sennett**
The Human Comedy: **Frank Capra**
Craftsman of the Drama: **William Wyler**
Craftsman of Melodrama: **John Huston**
Craftsman of the Epic: **George Stevens**
Master of the Animated World: **Walt Disney**
Pioneer of the Poetic Documentary: **Robert Flaherty**

Series Ten

Friday, April 9

The Pioneer: DAVID WARK GRIFFITH

INTOLERANCE (1916, Wark Producing Corp.) With Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, Robert Harron, Constance Talmage, Erich von Stroheim and many others.
The original musical score will be played by VERNON GEYER. (Minshall organ from Kohler & Chase.)

Speaker: **ROUBEN MAMOULIAN.** The famed director both in films and on the Broadway stage (including *Porgy & Bess* and *Oklahoma*), and vice president of the Screen Directors Guild, will give an outstanding analysis of the work of D. W. Griffith.

Thursday, April 15

New Treatments in Realism: FRED ZINNEMAN

THE SEARCH (1948, MGM) With Montgomery Clift, Aline MacMahon, and Jarmila Novotna.

Speaker: **FRED ZINNEMANN.** Before Mr. Zinnemann's recent triumphs, such as HIGH NOON and FROM HERE TO ETERNITY, he made major advances in neo-realism, and THE SEARCH was one of the best.

Friday, April 23

Tradition of the West: JOHN FORD

YOUNG MR. LINCOLN (1939, Twentieth-Century Fox) With Henry Fonda and Pauline Moore.

Speaker: **KENNETH MACGOWAN.** As a director, John Ford's favorite personal work, YOUNG MR. LINCOLN, was produced by Kenneth Macgowan, who is also distinguished as the organizer of the UCLA's Theatre Art Department, which has the notable Motion-Picture Division.

Friday, April 30

Tradition of the Musical: VINCENTE MINNELLI

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS (1943, MGM) With Judy Garland and Tom Drake.
AN AMERICAN IN PARIS (1951, MGM) (Dance Sequence) With Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron, and selections from other films selected by Mr. Minnelli.

Speaker: **VINCENTE MINNELLI.** Because of his brilliant combination of camera, ballet, taste and sentiment, he has altered the status and possibility of the film musical.

Friday, May 7

The Pageant of History: CECIL B. DE MILLE

THE CRUSADES (1935, Paramount) With Henry Wilcoxon and Loretta Young.
REAP THE WILD WIND (1941, Paramount) (Section) With Ray Milland and Paulette Goddard.

Speaker: **MITCHELL LEISEN.** Mr. Leisen has long been one of the top directors in Hollywood, but before that he was Mr. de Mille's set-designer for 13 years, THE CRUSADES being an example of his many-sided talents.

Friday, May 14

Revolution in Animation: UNITED PRODUCTIONS OF AMERICA

Speaker: **STEPHEN BOSUSTOW.** Mr. Bosustow, founder and president of UPA, will show us many of the most famous of UPA's creations, from FLAT-HATTING to THE TELL-TALE HEART, and will speak of their vigorous technical artistry and unique design, which has so greatly added to the animated film.

Thursday, May 20

Tradition of the Documentary Film: PARE LORENTZ and WILLARD VAN DYKE

This program will include Pare Lorentz's THE RIVER (1937), and a section from THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS (1936); Sections from Mr. Van Dyke's THE CITY (1939), VALLEY TOWN (1940), THE PHOTOGRAPHER (1948), and AMERICAN FRONTIER (1952).

Speaker: **WILLARD VAN DYKE.** This great documentarist will discuss Lorentz's classic work as well as those great contributions for which he is responsible.

Programs arranged by Frank Stauffacher

NOTE: The films and speakers come from widely different areas. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control. Art In Cinema has been a copyrighted name since 1947. It is not to be confused with other showings in the Bay Area or elsewhere, save those in collaboration with the University of California Extension division.

Tickets for single programs sold *only* at the door on the evening of performances: Museum Members . . . . . $1.00 Non-members $1.25

Illustration 33. Program announcement for the tenth series, spring 1954. An order blank followed the text.

Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Tenth Series, Spring 1954

The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

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Thursday, May 20

Tradition of the Documentary Film: PARE LORENTZ and WILLARD VAN DYKE

This program will include Pare Lorentz's THE RIVER (1937), and a section from THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS (1936); Sections from Mr. Van Dyke's THE CITY (1939), VALLEY TOWN (1940), THE PHOTOGRAPHER (1948), and AMERICAN FRONTIER (1952).

Speaker: **WILLARD VAN DYKE**. This great documentarist will discuss Lorentz's classic work as well as those great contributions for which he is responsible.

Programs arranged by Frank Stauffacher

NOTE: The films and speakers come from widely different areas. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control. Art In Cinema has been a copyrighted name since 1947. It is not to be confused with other showings in the Bay Area or elsewhere, save those in collaboration with the University of California Extension division.

[An order blank followed. Series tickets were $7.50, $6.00 for Museum members; advance tickets for both series were available at $12.00 and $10.00.]

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Letter to Joseph Youngerman from Frank Stauffacher, 4/12/54

April 12, 1954

Mr. Joseph Youngerman
Executive Secretary
The Screen Directors Guild
9123 Sunset Boulevard
Hollywood, California

Dear Joe:

It was extremely good to meet you up here. And I was further glad that you saw the setup under which we have conducted these film showings, the audience, and the quality of them. Further than that, I was glad because I could better understand the expectations you had in mind in cooperating with us on this series. I am only sorry that I didn't come down to talk to you in Hollywood beforehand, and have a more conclusive picture in order to make this initial session satisfactory to everyone concerned.

I want to say, though, that it was much more than satisfactory to the audience. It was definitely a hit, and a grand sendoff for the rest of the series; I say this in sincerity.

Mr. Mamoulian is going to have an interview for the S. F. Examiner tomorrow morning, and in the afternoon two interviews, one on the Jane Todd Show for CBS, and one on the Marjorie Trumbull Show on TV. The enclosed review of Mamoulian's talk by Luther Nichols in the Chronicle has been also taken up by the New York Times. In addition, KPFA wants an interview and we are trying to fit it in. It is only a pity that all of this couldn't have been alerted sooner, but as I said many times, none of us had any inkling that Mr. Mamoulian was planning to stay here for more than the one day, and

Illustration 34. Still from Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke's *The City* (1939). Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive.

would care for interviews, etc. I should have known it as the common requisite, but at the same time George Stevens was up here in a flash and back to L. A., without any particular care for additional commitments while here, and neither was Lou Smith, so it seemed, that we automatically planned the rest of the director's visits in keeping with that.

However, you can be assured that the situation has been righted, and there will be more press and radio interviews—which they should have—for the succeeding guest speakers than we can handle—only, please, Joe, re-remind them that we cannot afford more than the plane fare round-trip and one night over, because we have to operate on a low budget, and we planned it with the one day expense factor in mind as being the only way we could do it. In the end, it is not for my benefit, or even the Museum's, but the American director, because I have long thought that such a thing should be done and no one did it. Thanks to you, it has so far proved a thing that the intelligent public really likes.

These so-called "Art In Cinema" series here at the Museum must be financially self-supporting. There is no fund in the Museum's financial set-up for it, yet it has been the most fully attended activity in the Museum, and has become the oldest, consistently high-standard, non-commercial film society in the country. There are other film activities at the Museum, but this is a rather special one, conducted only yearly or bi-yearly, depending upon the availability of a certain quality and kind of program material—such as this present one. I do not earn a living at it, but do other commercial film work outside. If you have ever heard of a labor of love, this is one. I do get a percentage of the net for my conducting of it, but it is hardly a living. The others who aid me on this are regular members of the Museum staff, including my wife. I say this to explain why it is necessary for the Art In Cinema series to be self-financed, and essential for it to operate on a tight budget.

But we do not forget how much we owe you personally for making this series possible. It couldn't be done without your initial work in convincing our guest speakers to come up here, naturally. And your coming up here made us better aware of the whole situation from your angle.

I'll call or write again. The public reception has been outstanding here so far, and I see no reason why it shouldn't continue, except for the projectionist who falls asleep.

Also, would you please send us whatever you have in the way of biographies on Zinnemann and Minnelli so that we have more material to hand out to the press beforehand, in order to keep them alerted.

Most sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

FS:bs

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Luther Nichols, "Dissertations on the Arts of Movie-Making," *New York Times*, 4/25/54

Hollywood has exploited stars, sex and sin often enough in trying to sell its product to the public. But it has rarely made any effort to use the creative artistry of its directors as a selling point. In fact, it has often seemed leery of admitting there is such a thing in the making of films as "Art," and, next to cracking a camera lens, the best way to be thought subversive on some lots is to mention the word.

There is one reason the current Art in Cinema series at the San Francisco Museum of Art is so unusual and momentous. For the Hollywood Screen Directors Guild is sending north some of its most distinguished members to speak here on fourteen weekly programs for Art in Cinema—members such as Rouben Mamoulian, Fred Zinnemann, Kenneth Macgowan and Vincent Minnelli. They're not holding forth on the latest stretch in screens, the dimensions of the newest starlet or the heroics of Tony Curtis, either, but on the things they know best—the arts of good film-making.

Popular

Perhaps it couldn't have happened before the encroachments of television drove Hollywood to think of superior quality as an advantage, rather than as a box-office handicap.

Anyway, it has happened, and San Franciscans are having an unprecedented opportunity to expand their appreciation and enjoyment of motion pictures by attending these film lectures.

The series is entitled "Aspects of the American Film: 15 Directors." Rouben Mamoulian, noted stage and screen innovator and a member of the Guild's board of directors, opened the programs on April 9 before a jammed house. He offered some introductory remarks, a few ABC's of film-making and a stirring speech on the pioneering contributions of David Wark Griffith. Griffith's "Intolerance" was then screened, with the original musical score played on an organ.

By the time the show was over, there weren't many doubts left that this unique cooperation of Hollywood and the West Coast's leading "art film" society is an exciting and valuable experiment. The applause was thunderous.

After the showing of a cut-down version of "Intolerance," most of the audience was ready to agree whole-heartedly with Mamoulian: "There was indeed a master." The patrons left far richer in film savvy, and only $1.25 poorer in pocket (series subscription rates knock that single admission price down to about 85 cents).

After Mamoulian, Art in Cinema presented Mitchell Leisen, former art director for Cecil B. DeMille and a picture director in his own right. He spoke on DeMille and the spectacle film, and by way of illustration, "The Crusades" was shown. Last Friday it was Kenneth Macgowan on John Ford and the Western tradition. This coming Friday the museum has scheduled the recent Academy Award winning director, Fred Zinnemann, on realism in films. And on subsequent programs the series will feature Vincente Minnelli on the musical film; Stephen Bosustow, president of United Productions of America, on cartoons, and Willard Van Dyke on documentary.

That's the lineup for the first half of the series. The second half is now being shaped.

The idea for the series, assertedly the first of its kind and scope in the country, sprang from an exhibition on the work of 15 top American directors which was designed for the Smithsonian Institution and the State Department by Frank Stauffacher, head of Art in Cinema and a leading 16-mm.

film experimenter. That exhibit was prepared two years ago to show the positive achievements of American moviemakers to audiences abroad.

"In preparing it," says Stauffacher, "and in dealing with the big traditions of styles—the slapstick comedy, the Western, the musical—I found the exhibit helped to formulate our most vital contributions to world cinema history. It seemed to become a re-evaluation of the American film."

Genesis

Last year, when Director George Stevens talked on Stauffacher's ninth Art in Cinema series, Frank realized the possibilities of combining his "Fifteen Directors" idea with personal appearances by leading creative artists from Hollywood. He and his wife, Bobbie, got on the phone and somewhat to their surprise, the Screen Directors Guild and its executive secretary, Joseph Youngerman, proved delighted at a chance to have its members emerge from their accustomed obscurity to talk about their craft.

All this has resulted in some excellent, adult-level public relations for Hollywood. And in a pleasant education for people from all over Northern California who come to see the shows. And in something that may have lasting cultural benefit.

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Letter to Frank and Barbara Stauffacher from Fred Zinnemann, 5/7/54

[. . .]

May 7, 1954

Dear Frank and Barbara:

Thank you so much for your letter and the enclosed clippings. I am delighted that everything went so well and that the audience enjoyed the evening. As for myself, I had an interesting and stimulating time. I think that you are doing something very worthwhile for motion pictures in general and for Hollywood in particular.

Best regards and much luck to both of you.

Sincerely,

Fred Z. *[hw]*
FRED ZINNEMANN

[. . .]

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Letter to Rouben Mamoulian from Frank Stauffacher, 5/12/54

May 12, 1954

Mr. Rouben Mamoulian
1112 Schuyler Road
Beverly Hills
California

Dear Mr. Mamoulian:

Thank you very much for your kind letter of April 30. I'm sorry that I couldn't answer it sooner, but momentarily I was under pressure on work other than the Museum activity. But, in a way, it is better that I answer now because the S.D.G.A. [Screen Directors Guild of America] collaboration is over for this series, and I can give a more rounded report.

I'm sure that each one of the directors has brought back to the S.D.G.A. good reports of his appearance on this series. Each program has been highly successful, to put it mildly. All of them have had "packed" houses, and packed with a very alert and intelligent audience.

Since it has been an experiment to me as well as to you people, I had no idea how it would seem as it shaped up into a series. But I did see how highly individual each director is, how different as personalities they are, and therefore impossible to classify the results of their appearances here. They were all top-notch, in spite of the fact that many were quite nervous about the whole thing. The nervousness didn't register to the audience at all. Personally, I was most gratified when the speakers told me, as you told me, that the experience was deeply and sincerely stimulating to them—because the audience was stimulated by their appearances, and displayed an acute interest in this creative side of movie-making. Many members of the audience have said to me that this has opened a whole new, mature side of Hollywood that they were not aware of. This is the major reason why we have put the series on, as you know.

Judging from the number of letters from the East, no doubt as a result of the article in the N. Y. Times on May 25 by Luther Nichols, the S.D.G.A. will be asked to do this same sort of thing elsewhere—various film clubs, universities, etc.—because it looks as if we have opened a new activity for film groups. May I venture to say that the success of such further branching of director's talks depends entirely on the climate of the audience. San Francisco is fortunately blessed with what can be considered one of the best audiences in the country. I would recommend, if I were asked, that the Museum of Modern Art Film Library in New York could do it well. But, of course, it is highly uncertain that the S.D.G.A. could or would want to do this sort of thing again. But I hope they will be pleased with the venture here, and will feel that the effort of each director is well worth it, both to the Guild and to himself. Naturally I mean you, too. You set the series off with a grand and eloquent tone which will always be remembered. To you and the S.D.G.A., we owe the deepest and most sincere thanks.

Allon Schoener, who knows how to operate the Italian coffee-maker, and who selected that gift for Mrs. Mamoulian and yourself, is at present working night and day in preparation for the Dufy opening here, so I have been unsuccessful in getting instructions on working the apparatus for you, but he wants to write you about it. It is a fairly simple procedure, however. But you should hear from him in a very few days. He owns one, but I don't, so he can send you the instructions.

We've received the tape from KPFA today, and it is being mailed to you with this mailing.

Again, my wife and I send you and Mrs. Mamoulian our most sincere greetings and best wishes, and acknowlegements for all you have done for us.

Most sincerely yours,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Joseph Youngerman from Frank Stauffacher, 5/20/54

May 20, 1954

[. . .]

Dear Joe:

We would like to have the recorded tapes back here for the purpose of beginning to write the book on the American film directors, similar to my State Department exhibition in 1952 and our further development of the idea in our series here at the Museum.

I am not sure that we will transcribe the tape recordings in toto for the book. Perhaps we will use the tapes as a reference. At any rate, the outline, and more exact ideas, will be shown to you for

additional material and facts when I come down to see you. My desire to start the book as soon as possible is because it will be considerable work, and so the sooner started, the better.

The book would be published in New York with the partial by-line of the San Francisco Museum of Art which of course you know has the signed statements of approval from the speakers for this use of the tapes made here. The character of the book will not be of a critical nature, and in fact, it will consist more of stills than of copy—stills from the work of the various directors. In other words, it would resemble my original exhibition for the Department of State's foreign use, but, of course, with far better development. It amounts to this: The State Department's exhibit was done in New York without much official help from the industry, relying on my own judgement and with months of study. On the other hand, the book would be aided by our first-hand work at the source, i.e., the directors whom we are talking about.

Your cooperation with us has worked out extremely well mutually, and we are sincerely grateful to you. It is an unexamplified thing for the American director and it was initiated here in San Francisco. So it would be appreciated where ever it comes up if credit to us for first putting it into operation could be acknowledged.

Again, thank you, and I look forward to seeing you and talking about all this as well as the second half of the series on the directors during the summer when we can get to Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Frank Stauffacher

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Letter to Lou Smith from Barbara Stauffacher, 5/28/54

May 28, 1954

Mr. Lou Smith
340 N. Rodeo Drive
Beverly Hills, California

Dear Lou:

Frank has been meaning to write you every week since this series started. After all—you were such a vital part of its beginning and truly got it going to the success it has been. It really has been a fine thing. Did you see the write-up in the New York Times? And the directors have all been really good and have all come and all seemed sincerely to have enjoyed the experience, even though all of them were nervous as the devil before they started to talk.

We want to give many sincere thanks to Mr. Stevens. Every director who has been here has said that they talked to Stevens and he liked it here and had said it was a good thing—and really, I think that had a great deal to do with their actually coming. Please give him our thanks. The two of you truly pioneered this thing through.

I have now started to write everybody about the second half of the series. We had printed George Stevens on the announcement of the second half as you must have noticed because he was one of the original 15 directors from the exhibition. But now I am beginning to think that we really can't ask him to come up here again—unless he would want to come, of course. He has been here twice for us, and though we would love to have him, we feel we can't expect it. Also, he must be in the middle of THE GIANT now.

However, seeing that he is scheduled, on one of the "15 directors," would this idea work or is it all wrong—that he or someone else of his choice from THE GIANT come and talk about that film while it is still in production? Is that good pre-release publicity for you or is it not to be done? It would certainly make a wonderful evening in line with what we are trying to do. Maybe some rough

footage could be shown? What do you think? We have the George Stevens evening announced for October 8, though that can be switched around if necessary. Perhaps someone on the crew could talk if Mr. Stevens couldn't get away? Will you ask him about this if it is at all possible?

You know we are trying to form all the material into a book. All the talks have been taped. With the data from the exhibition it should make a real book on the American film director. Naturally, George Stevens will be in that. I wish we had taped his talk that night. Does he have a copy of it we would be able to refer to when the time comes?

Again many belated thanks for all your help to us. Hello and good wishes from Frank.

[Barbara Stauffacher]

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Letter to Frank Capra from Barbara Stauffacher, 5/28/54

May 28, 1954

Mr. Frank Capra
Paramount Pictures Corporation
5451 Marathon Street
Hollywood 38, California

Dear Mr. Capra:

We have just completed the first half of our series presenting the work and ideas of American film directors—ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS. We are very proud that it was most successful, due primarily to the splendid cooperation and enthusiasm of the Screen Directors Guild and to the directors themselves who participated here. We were fortunate in having such men as Fred Zinnemann, Vincente Minnelli, and Willard Van Dyke to show and talk about their own films; Stephen Bosustow to talk about UPA, Rouben Mamoulian to discuss D. W. Griffith, Mitchel Leisen on Cecil B. de Mille, and Kenneth Macgowan to talk about John Ford. Being an unprecedented study of the American film director, with the directors participating, there has been a great deal of enthusiasm by the press as well as individuals and groups here, in New York, and throughout the country.

As I told you earlier the idea for this series is based upon the exhibition of the same title that Frank Stauffacher did for the State Department and the Smithsonian Institute in 1952, for distribution in Germany and South America. We have used the men he selected to represent the dominant themes in American film traditions. We also are planning to incorporate the material from the exhibit, with the more intimate and personal knowledge brought forth by the directors themselves, into a book on the American film director.

As you know from my previous letter you are one of the directors we are planning to present. We have set Friday, September 24 as the date for the showing of your work. We would be most happy if you could be our guest speaker for that evening. I realize this is some time away, but if there is a possibility that this date might fit into your schedule and that you would enjoy coming to San Francisco to be our speaker for that evening we would be most grateful. We are able to pay your traveling expenses and hotel accomodations for the trip here. The series will be held from September 10 through all the Fridays in October and as it is still early we can easily exchange this Friday, September 24, for another if it would be more convenient. Those evenings where the director talked about his own work, instead of someone else talking about him, were undoubtly the most rewarding.

As for the film or films we might show—we would like to leave this choice up to you. Fred Zinnemann showed his THE SEARCH; George Stevens and Vincente Minnelli brought selected sections from a number of their films. This is up to the director—and also depends upon which films are

obtainable at the time. We ask your suggestions and welcome any ideas you may have on any aspect of the evening.

We have received the kindest cooperation from the Screen Directors Guild and I am sure that Mr. Joseph Youngerman will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

We look forward to hearing from you and we hope you will be able to come.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Stauffacher
Film Department

cc: Mr. Joseph Youngerman

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Letter to Frances H. Flaherty from Barbara Stauffacher, 7/8/54

July 8, 1954

Mrs. Frances H. Flaherty
Robert Flaherty Foundation, Inc.
119 East 19th Street
New York 3, New York

Dear Mrs. Flaherty:

Thank you for your letter of June 24 and for your interest in the Art In Cinema series ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS, and particularly the Flaherty evening.

Naturally we would be most glad to make the [Robert Flaherty] Foundation known to our audience. Though at this time I do not see how this might be done. We have had some disquiet with regard to the selection of a good and proper speaker to talk about Robert Flaherty and his films. We would of course very much like to have you, or perhaps Richard Griffith, talk as you are undoubtly the most able. However, the fact is that we simply can not afford to bring our speaker out from New York.

As it stands now we will have either John Houseman or Irving Pischel speak. We feel that both would be very good. But exactly what they say would of course be up to them. Being a "director" series I think Mr. Pischel will probably be the speaker we use, though I have heard that Mr. Houseman spoke wonderfully as a friend at the Flaherty evening at the Museum of Modern Art.

We would be very glad to cooperate within the limitations of the evening with any suggestions you might have whereby the Foundation's work might be made known.

We have taped all the talks and will continue to do so. And we would be glad to make a copy of this tape available to you.

Please let us know any ideas you may have in regard to the evening and thank you for your interest.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Stauffacher *[hw]*
Barbara Stauffacher
Film Department

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Letter to Barbara Stauffacher from Frances H. Flaherty, 7/27/54

Robert Flaherty Foundation, Inc.
119 East 19th Street
New York 3, N. Y.
Gramercy 5-6590

July 27, 1954

[. . .]

Dear Mrs. Stauffacher:

The aim of the Robert Flaherty Foundation is, as the Foundation's statement says, to encourage motion picture production in the Flaherty tradition and by the Flaherty method. Robert Flaherty opened up with his pictures a whole world of motion picture making that no one has carried further. We believe it can and should be carried further, and the aim of the Foundation is to find the way this can be done.

We know that all over the world are cameramen with vision and imagination, aching for opportunity to make their dreams, give their gifts, explore themselves, their subject, their craft. We know that all over the world are peoples—as well as the Eskimos, Polynesians and Aran Islanders that Bob filmed—who have met and are meeting the challenge of their environment in ways of beauty and courage. We know that everywhere in every country are people eager to see these films that are not only true but radiantly and excitingly so. As the young pueblo boy said to me after seeing "Nanook," "Why can't we have more films like this?"

We can have them, perfectly well. Robert Flaherty left not only this tradition, he left also a technique—a definite technique which is as much a part of his work as was his own personality. Both partook of the same source. But whereas his personality was his own, his technique is anybody's. It is just the one first step to be taken into the tradition. There is nothing difficult about it. Bob simply found the way to make these films. He found it in the machine. He researched this new machine, the motion picture camera, its capabilities, and for our machine age his discoveries about it are important, perhaps more important than the films themselves. We have to find a way of thought for our new age. This new thought is the challenge the machine age presents to us. If someone has discovered this new thought, as applied to one of the greatest mediums of communication of the age, it is important for us to know it and understand it, and to understand what are the new principles, or maybe age-old and universal principles, it involves.

With every new film he undertook Bob would say to me, we would say to each other, "Perhaps this will be the one." He meant: perhaps this will be the one that will start the whole movement going, that will bring other film-makers in, other and more sponsors, and will gradually, as there are more films to feed them, establish the audience. A new free film world, a Second Screen of true films—this actually in so many words was Robert Flaherty's hope and vision that he gave his life for, film by film.

The Foundation has by no means blueprinted a way to realize this dream. How could it? But we believe it can be worked out some way, that it will be worked out, simply because not to have it worked out is unthinkable. It is too big, there is too much power in it not to happen. For one thing, we believe that in every department of life many people are beginning to reach out for something beyond the moment, for the sort of satisfaction that only a fundamental integrity, a really personal and creative approach to things, can give. Even the businessman, in business as it is coming to be and must come to be, can begin to understand and respect this that is the only motive of the artist, wishing as Chekhov humbly said of himself, "I would like to be a free artist—and that is all." We have been so overwhelmed with speed and time and the passing moment that we turn gladly to the enduring, to the deeper roots in us we feel we are in danger of losing.

I hope many in your audience will be interested to take home a Foundation statement. The Foundation is seeking to build itself now in the beginning phase through showing the films and talking about them to as many groups as we can interest. We offer them a package in either 16 mm or 35 mm, of the four major Flaherty films together with other films in the Flaherty tradition—four

programs in all. We have a BBC broadcast, "Portrait of Robert Flaherty," included in the package. I myself will talk about the films, about Bob and the Foundation, wherever possible.

This is all explained in a leaflet which will be enclosed with the statement, and I hope that many of your group will be interested to take them home and spread the word.

Thank you very much for your cooperation, and I do hope the Flaherty evening at the Museum will be a great success. You have my warmest wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Francis H. Flaherty *[hw]*
Frances H. Flaherty

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Program Announcement for Art in Cinema's Eleventh Series, Fall 1954

The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

ART IN CINEMA

Series Eleven Ninth Year

The second part of Aspects of the American film: the Work of Fifteen Directors

Through the cooperation of six prominent film directors as guest speakers, showing their own films, this series will again present some of the most positive and consequential aspects of the American film.

Although it is difficult to say who is most responsible for a complicated business such as the motion picture, the director is, with out a doubt, most responsible for its final creative core.

Six Friday evenings at 8

October 1 **GENE KELLY**

The famed dancer is also a director, not only in collaboration with such directors as Vincente Minnelli in the musical, but of his own INVITATION TO THE DANCE, which has not yet been commercially released. Mr. Kelly will show sections from **INVITATION TO THE DANCE**, and his directorial sequences from **ON THE TOWN and SINGING IN THE RAIN** (MGM).

October 8 **WILLIAM WELLMAN**

Such films as his A PUBLIC ENEMY and NOTHING SACRED represent the best traditions of the American film, but his **THE OX BOW INCIDENT** (1943, 20th Century Fox) must be considered a truly unique classic. Mr. Wellman will discuss this film in conjunction with its showing on this program.

October 15 **MERIAN C. COOPER on ROBERT FLAHERTY**

As one of the earliest and most influential of the documentary film makers, Merian C. Cooper, together with Ernest Schoedsack, was second only to Robert Flaherty. Mr. Cooper will talk about Flaherty's films as well as his own documentaries. **MAN OF ARAN** (1934, Gaumont-British) by Robert Flaherty, and sections from **GRASS** (1925, Paramount) and **CHANG** (1927, Paramount) by Cooper and Schoedsack, will be shown.

October 22 **JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ**

A producer and later a director, Mr. Mankiewicz has been responsible for such fine films as **ALL ABOUT EVE** (1950, 20th Century Fox) and **JULIUS CEASAR** (1953, MGM). Sections of these two will be shown for his talk here.

The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

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October 29 **JEAN NEGULESCO**
Mr. Negulesco, formerly a graphic artist, first directed THE MASK OF DEMETRIUS in 1934. Since then he has risen to the top, and his fine film, **JOHNNY BELINDA** (1948, Warner Bros.) is his selection for showing on this program.

November 5 **MACK SENNETT**
The tradition of the early slapstick was a tradition of "pure cinema," and out of it came much of the film's further development. Mr. Sennett's career bridges, in essence, almost the entire range of the motion picture.

Programs arranged by Frank Stauffacher

NOTE: The guest speakers and the films to be shown are from widely different locations. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control. ART IN CINEMA has been a copyrighted name since 1947. It is not to be confused with other showings in the Bay Area or elsewhere, save those in collaboration with the University of California Extension division.

Tickets for single programs sold *only* at the door on the evening of performances: Museum Members . . . . . $1.00 Non-members $1.25

Illustration 35. Program announcement for the eleventh and final series, fall 1954. An order blank followed the text.

October 29 **JEAN NEGULESCO**

Mr. Negulesco, formerly a graphic artist, first directed THE MASK OF DEMETRIUS in 1934. Since then he has risen to the top, and his fine film, **JOHNNY BELINDA** (1948, Warner Bros.) is his selection for showing on this program.

November 5 **MACK SENNETT**

The tradition of the early slapstick was a tradition of "pure cinema," and out of it came much of the film's further development. Mr. Sennett's career bridges, in essence, almost the entire range of the motion picture.

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[An order blank followed. Series tickets were $6.50, $5.00 for Museum members.]

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Letter to Frances H. Flaherty from Barbara Stauffacher, 10/18/54

October 18, 1954

[. . .]

Dear Mrs. Flaherty:

The Flaherty Program here last Friday night was a great success, and the tribute to your husband was deeply felt by all.

I am enclosing a copy of the program notes. However, the order of showing the films was changed. Mr. [Mirian C.] Cooper felt that MAN OF ARAN was the logical film to end the evening, as it was the peak of the evening, so we ran CHANG before the intermission, and MAN OF ARAN after. There were about 600 people in the auditorium and they received the film with great emotion.

Mr. Cooper told me that he was sorry that he had never met you—you remember, I assumed that you would know each other. He said many fine things about Mr. Flaherty and his films, for his admiration of Mr. Flaherty is very great.

There will be some press in a few days and I will send it to you.

Most sincerely,

Barbara Stauffacher
Film Department

Encl.

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Letter to Barbara Stauffacher from Amos Vogel, 8/22/55

August 22, 1955

Bobbie Stauffacher
2622 Franklin Street
San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Bobbie:

I have been deeply shocked and saddened by the terrible news. There is really nothing one can say at such a time that would be truly meaningful to the ones that are left behind—but I can say this and mean it deeply: Those of us who knew Frank intimately have lost a true and rare friend, a true and rare human being. In an industry with more than the usual share of cut-throats and slick businessmen, he was the one and only person I knew who had no enemies; the only person, in fact, about whom nothing bad or negative or unpleasant was said behind his back. His integrity, devotion to his life's work and his sincerity were too transparent to be misunderstood by even the most narrow-minded. He pioneered in this field and set standards for all of us, Cinema 16 included. Art In Cinema will stand as his achievement and your contribution to it in his last months will not be forgotten either.

Being a father myself now, I know that you at least have the wonderful consolation of his continuing to live in a thousand different ways in your child. This is something that cannot be taken from you.

Please let me know if I can be of any help in any way. And please be assured of my continuing friendship and love.

Marcia joins me.

Sincerely,

[Amos]

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